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SOCIALISM AND SOCIETY

BY

J. RAMSAY MACDONALD, M.P.

SIXTH EDITION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS.

PREFACE. PAGE

The British Electors' suspicion of theory ... xi
is mistaken because (1) historically, grand political epochs coincide with grand religious and philosophical epochs, ... xii
and (2) political practice and theory are as a matter of fact inseparable. xii
This is particularly the case when politics become constructive xiii
as they are to-day. xiv
For constructive political work the organic conception of society is the most fruitful. ... xvii
As the Socialist alone considers not only the individual but the social unit in his work he must have a clear idea of what the nature of the unit is. xviii
This necessitates a re-statement of the Socialist conception of historical progress. xix
The circumstances under which the Sixth Edition is being prepared.... xxi

CHAPTER I.—THE PROBLEM.

The Problem is Poverty, which is not merely physical but mental and moral. 1
Outward improvement may proceed along with vital decay. 3
The question does not merely affect the workman, but the capitalist 4
and the whole of society. 7
Individuality is rare under modern conditions. ... 7
The reason is that each function in society is self-centred and competitive; 8
hence, co-ordination is the task of the Twentieth Century 10

CHAPTER II.—SOCIETY AND THE INDIVIDUAL.

Political policies depend upon what view one takes of the social type of unity. 11
Does the organic type correspond to facts? ... 12
Individualist psychology exaggerates the free play of the human will, ... 13
whilst the Socialist conception of function ... 14
and the dependence of the individual upon society 16
as illustrated in the change of individual function which follows social re-organisation, ... 18
are in accord with the biological view of social progress, viz: that it depends upon modification of the social structure. 19
in which the supreme effort of individual will through force, *e.g.*, Revolution, counts little ... 21
The purely individual functions in progress are:
1—Alterations of social structure by industrial invention, etc. 25
2—Alterations of social structure by effective moral demand. 26
To the race, however, belongs the inheritance of the past, and the individual shares in that inheritance through his communal group. ... 29

"Individualism," so-called, is therefore an unreal abstraction. 30
Further points in connection with the conception of society as an organic type are (1) its form, and (2) its self-consciousness. 33
Society is an organisation of the biological type, and our ideas of the individual and the community must be formed accordingly. ... 36

Chapter III.—The Economic Period.

Society exists for purposes of mutual aid, ... 38
therefore a society whose functions are competitive evolves into Socialism 39
Society develops through the political and the economic stages to the moral one. 41
The political stage is governed by the necessities of a nation-making period,... 42
develops democratic forms 44
and passes into the economic stage, ... 47
which is at first competitive and individualistic. 47
This stage is now complete, ... 50
because (1) sub-division of labour has gone about as far as it can, ... 50
as is illustrated in shoe-making and tailoring ; 52
(2) co-ordination of different trades has begun, ... 54
as is illustrated by the Steel Trust, etc. ; ... 54
(3) the power of capital, owing to facilities for communication, etc., has been too much increased to be socially safe, ... 55
as illustrated by the use of machinery, etc. ; ... 57
(4) competition is giving place to monopoly within certain areas, and 62
(5) between others is developing into national wars ; and 64
(6) the competitive state cannot meet certain demands made upon it. 65

So far we have only been solving the problems of wealth production, ... 66
which have not necessitated a very complete organisation of the organs brought into existence. 68
This process, regarded from a biological point of view, is seen to contain safeguards against cataclysms, ... 69
but it encourages parasitism,... 70
as illustrated in the Monarchy and the House of Lords 72
The period also has its ethical characteristics, *e.g.* Evangelicism, ... 74
and its political, *e.g.*, Individualism, ... 78
the problems it has given us to solve. 81

CHAPTER IV.—UTOPIAN AND SEMI-SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM.

The mistake of the Utopia builders was that they assumed that Society was an architectural relationship which could be made and unmade at the will of individuals. 82
Sir Thomas More and Robert Owen taken as examples 84
to show that the criticisms of the Utopians seem modern, ... 85
but they did not understand the influence of Society. 86
When Owen lived, Society was beginning to solve the problems of wealth production, ... 86
and in doing so had to sacrifice the interest of its cells, the individuals. 90
Modification of the social structure necessary for progress, and this must be done in keeping with Society's "law of being," 91
as shown in the history of the Co-operative movement. 92

The functions of Society must be co-ordinated before moral results can be attained, ... 96
but before this could be seen, biological science had to be so far advanced as to establish evolution on a sure foundation, ... 98
Philosophy, especially German philosophy, had been speculating upon the same problem, ... 100
and Marx approached Socialism through Hegelianism. 103
Marx's task was to weld rival Socialist dogmas and methods, ... 104
but being a pre-Darwinian 109
he accepted Hegel's idea of growth 111
and the rational part of his dialectic, ... 112
and so was misled by thoughts of negation, revolution, etc., ... 113
which the social condition of England at the time encouraged. 119
Marx's conception of social growth is pre-Darwinian and Utopian 121

CHAPTER V.—TOWARDS SOCIALISM.

The approach to Socialism through a class war 123
assumes a simple opposition of two economic classes, ... 124
whilst the proletariat and the bourgeoisie are themselves split up into economic sub-sections, 125
Interests of the same persons are complex, *e.g.*, influence of Co-operation and Building Societies 131
Class interests are personal, ... 135
have no constructive value, ... 135
are the basis of the pre-Socialist labour movement, 136
and cannot be merged into social interests. ... 137
The progressive impulse is intellectual, ... 139
and Socialism is inevitable not because Capitalism is to break down, ... 141

but because man is a rational being. 142
The wage earners, however, are ripe for Socialist experiment, ... 144
because in their condition they are most easily influenced by Socialist thought; 145
but the Socialist appeal is for a rational judgment upon its conceptions of the community and the individual. 146

CHAPTER VI.—SOCIALISM AND THE POLITICAL ORGAN.

A positive view of the State is essential to Socialism 149
In considering the political policy of Socialism, one must not overlook the characteristics of national political methods, because they vary in different countries. 151
In this country progress does not advance by revolutionary stages, ... 151
and parties are not dogmatic, but adopt experimental methods. 153
Socialism, developing through the Spencerian philanthropists, ... 158
Owenism and Chartism, ... 159
after a period of purely political interests, ... 161
has now reached the point when it becomes the guiding idea of progress. 162
A new party then becomes necessary to deal with the new problems in the new spirit, ... 164
e.g., through public control to co-ordinate public services like the supply of houses and trams. ... 165
The immediate needs of organised labour, ... 168
the ripened harvest of the teachings of Carlyle, Ruskin, Spencer, ... 168
and the definite Socialist organisations, ... 169
have united in forming the new political organ. 170
Thus, the apparent re-action of recent years ... 171
really indicates the end of the Liberal period in politics, ... 171

religion, ... 172
national finance, ... 173
social organisation 174
and belief in nationality. 175
Darwinism and Hegelianism are not the cause of reaction... 178
This is shown (1) by the split-up of the Liberal party, but more especially by (2) the rise of new fundamental ideas in politics, and 183
(3) the spread of new germinal political growths—Municipal Socialism, ... 184
and (4) the anti-socialist campaign which followed the Election of 1906. 185
The period of reaction has in reality been a transition from democracy in form to democracy in power 186
Though there is not identity, there is continuity between old and new progressive parties. ... 189
Socialism and the Labour Party. 191
The growth and decay of political parties. ... 192

CONCLUSION.

Land must be nationalised and 196
capital owned by the community. 197
It must also be emphasised that the social organisation of production determines distribution, 198
that Socialism will not be a static industrial state, 200
and that its views upon distribution are biological and not mechanical. 204
But the method of assimilation is not *a priori* but experimental. 204
The Socialist motto is not *Sic Volo, but Solvitur Ambulando,* 205
e.g., the Socialist view of property 207
and of the measure of value. 210
Socialism is not opposed to machinery. ... 210
Socialism would not destroy special groups like Trade Unions, the Church, the Family. ... 212
Its key idea is transformation. 213

PREFACE

TO THE SIXTH EDITION.

In a life the greater part of which has to be spent in the noisy and dusty arena where politics is a hand-to-hand battle, there are few opportunities given for retiring into the peaceful wilderness where one can think out the more fundamental questions of government, and see party differences justified and explained in the light of theories of what Society, the State, and politics are, of what the function of Parliament in a community is, of what progress means, and of what its method must be.

Indeed, it is the habit of plain matter-of-fact Britons to declare most sturdily that these questions are of no great importance to the man of affairs. British political life, it is stated, moves by experience and not by theory; and the British elector is supposed to suspect any man who attempts to regulate and develop political policy in accordance with certain intellectual conceptions, such as the evolution of the State and its relation to individual happiness. That political method, it is said, is foreign. It is the cause of revo-

lutions. It is unpractical. The British elector glories in his distrust of ideas. I have been taught since I became a member of Parliament that for a man to claim that his proposals are logical, is to condemn them to be smiled at by "wise" men and rejected by his fellow members.

There are two replies to the "practical" elector who is inclined to believe that politics is the art of living from hand to mouth—of muddling through. In the first place, every time that British politics has risen to heroic proportions, it has been either inspired by religious fervour, as in Cromwell's day, or strengthened by philosophical conviction, as in the epoch of the individualist Radicalism just closed. Though the British people may have no love for theoretical politics, their imagination must be lit up before they rise to great political efforts. But, in the second place, the most mediocre man who has ever gained the confidence of a respectable constituency on the ground that he has no flighty nonsense about him, has, in spite of himself, to take sides on fundamental questions.

Our happy-go-lucky disregard for theory —theory being after all nothing more harmful or dangerous than experience systematised and the broken visions of sight completed by the exercise of reason—threatens to become a calamity. Far be it from me to

join in the loud chorus of approval and amplification which, for too many years, has been applauding Carlyle's dyspeptic characterisation of Parliament as a talking shop, but if it were called a "jobbing shop," truth would not be violated. Its work is miscellaneous, scrappy, disorganised. It flies into panics, or goes quietly to sleep. It treats the most deeply-seated diseases as though they were but skin deep. It prunes when it should uproot; it patches when it should make anew; it refuses to see beyond its nose when it should be scanning the horizon. It is therefore the prey of any partisan wirepuller who, whilst beating his breast as a proof of his convictions, is laughing up his sleeve all the time at the credulity of the people.

The consequences are serious. When its work was to liberate, Parliament could roam like a Red Cross Knight, freeing any damsel held in durance vile whom it happened to come across—from a Nonconformist who wanted to wed and be buried in his faith, to an atheist or a Jew who wanted to represent a constituency in Parliament.

But this period is over, and that of social construction has begun. And how are we to build? What plans are we to execute? Empirical methods will not help us unless they are used as tests of ideal systems. With what idea are we to experiment? The sheer

pressure of clamour and need will force us to take action. In what direction are we to move? All change is not progressive. Which of the roads at present possible is the right one? We must pass more factory legislation. But what is the constructive function of factory legislation? We must amplify our laws of compensation to injured workmen. But what is to be the relation between the workmen, the employer and the community in respect to the financial responsibility imposed by more perfect compensation laws? We are beginning Old Age Pensions. But are they given as a right or granted as a favour? We shall probably be asked to interfere legislatively with wages. How far will the system of capitalism bear such interference? How far will such interference open out the way of further development to Society? What must be the nature, the limits and the direction of this interference, so as to allow and encourage a more perfect system of social relationships than that which is being broken down? The feeding of school children is being undertaken. Upon what principle should it be done? Is the State to supplant the family? Is the family to be retained as a social unit in the future? What ought to be the extent of its functions and duties? The appeals of the unemployed have compelled us to appoint committees and make

legislative proposals. How far is it legitimate for the State to provide work for men? What are the limits and nature of its responsibility in this respect? What comprehensive scheme of treatment for the unemployable follows as a necessary consequence upon any State recognition of the unemployed? The problems of rating and taxation are forcing themselves upon us under conditions of which the economists and statesmen of the last century had no experience. Do not the principles of rating and taxation require revision? Must we not reconsider what is the real function and justification of both public and private property? Even the machinery of democracy is being questioned. What is the best form of democratic organisation? Has the passing of the individualistic rights of man from the active stage of politics necessitated a revision of the conception of democracy which the eighteenth century handed on to the nineteenth? For instance, is the great shibboleth of eighteenth and nineteenth Century democracy: No Taxation without Representation: a sound basis for popular government, or was it a mere excuse for the enfranchisement of the Middle Classes? Above all, we shall have to consider how far the State can protect its industry, and what steps a modern industrial community should take to secure for its producers a fair share of the

world's markets, and for its consumers a fair share of its aggregate wealth. This question, crudely raised by the Tariff Reformers, has been as crudely answered by the "pure and simple" Free Traders.

These are but a few of the questions to the solution of which twentieth century statesmen will be called to contribute. And which of them can be successfully dealt with by merely yielding to the pressure, the cry, the passion, the fear, or the political exigency of the moment? One and all involve a consideration of what is the nature of the organised community, what is its relation to the individual, to voluntary combinations of individuals, to trade and commerce, and so on.

The danger of the theorist in politics is, of course, apparent. Theory may be a blind tyrant, a will-o'-the-wisp, a seductive syren. It may create an unreal world through which its bewitched victim rushes blindly to destruction. But it is the politician's business to bring theory and experiment into the closest touch, to prevent the one separating from the other, to use the first to keep the second intelligent, the second to keep the first sane. "Let us learn a lesson from Cantillon," wrote Jevons, "who, though he touches the "depths of theory in one chapter, knows how "to limit himself within the possibilities of "practical life in the next."*

*Principles of Economics, London, 1905, p. 175.

At any rate, in view of the emergence of these vital problems, we need to discover some illuminating idea of social organisation which will give each a natural order and a relative importance—which will enable us to find our place upon the map.

Such are the conclusions to which a pretty intimate connection with the actual business of politics has led me. In this volume I have attempted to explain the conception of Society which seems to me to accord with observed fact and offer a guidance for the constructive work of legislation which lies awaiting us. It perhaps does not deserve to be called the work of the study. Rather is it the jottings of spare moments saved with much effort from the conflict in the arena—the hurried summary of the principles of a politician.

I accept the organic type of organisation as that to which Society corresponds in its essential characteristics, and also as that which is most fruitful as a guide for political experiments. But, far be it from me to claim that all Socialists hold, or should hold, that view. There is too much doctrinairism in Socialism already. But we must work upon some provisional hypothesis, if political effort is to be anything but a pastime of the useless classes. "It is often said," writes M. Poincarè as a physical scientist,* "that

* *Science and Hypothesis*, Lond., 1905, p. 143.

" experiments should be made without pre-
" conceived ideas. That is impossible. Not
" only would it make every experiment fruit-
" less, but even if we wished to do so, it
" could not be done. Every man has his
" own conception of the world, and this he
" cannot so easily lay aside. We must, for
" example, use language, and our language
" is necessarily steeped in preconceived
" ideas. Only, they are unconscious precon-
" ceived ideas, which are a thousand times
" the most dangerous of all." This is as true of social as of physical science, of politics as of physics. Parliament is a laboratory; its legislative experiments must be undertaken in precisely the same scientific frame of mind as those of the chemist or the physicist.

If any section of politicians demur to this conception of their work, the Socialist at any rate cannot. For a distinction between the Socialist politician and all others is that he thinks of the whole of Society as well as of the separate individuals who compose it. It is as impossible for him to think of Man apart from Society as it is for the Scientist to think of Man apart from the Animal Kingdom. To the Socialist, Society is a Unity.

But that does not carry us very far. Before the idea of a united Society can help as a guide in legislation, we must make up our minds as to the type of unity to which

Society corresponds, because obviously upon that depends the relation between Society and the individual which legislation must express and must not violate. Having made up his mind as to the type, the Socialist is in a position to co-ordinate and organise the social problems pressing for solution, to co-ordinate and organise the proposals he makes regarding them.

I wrote this book hoping to be able to state the Socialist position to readers in this country in a way more in accord with British mental and political conditions than has hitherto been the case. Much yet remains to be done before the statement is satisfactory. Marx's co-ordination of historical fact and explanation of historical movement from the point of view of the Hegelian left wing, brought the whole theory of Socialism from the misty realms of vague desire, to the clearly defined empire of science. But our views of individual and social growth have been profoundly modified since Marx began his work. Moreover, the triumph of the dogmatic and hard-and-fast methods—which have characterised Marxians far more than Marx—has not been altogether a gain. The conceptions of social evolution which Marx held, never have been accepted by the majority of British Socialists. Society in this country, with its

free institutions and machinery which can respond to the least impulse of the popular will so soon as the people care to express themselves, progresses by an assimilation of ideas and circumstances. The process of organic nutrition is paralleled in the process of social nutrition. Individuals formulate ideas. Society gradually assimilates them, and gradually the assimilation shows its effects on the social structure—on institutions. The laws of organic assimilation apply in a specially simple way to our conditions, our politics and our parties; and it is the operation of these non-catastrophic and non-revolutionary laws which to-day is causing social unsettlement and calling for political readjustment.

Within the limits of this necessarily small volume, I have been unable to show in what respect the organic likeness of Society requires special modification. The chief differences, so far as they pertain to this study, are, that the social organism is less rigidly fixed than the biological organism, at least in its higher forms; and that in social experiments biological law becomes a principal consciously understood and adapted to circumstances carefully selected and prepared in such a way as to produce swift results—though it may be well to say that the swiftness is commonly exaggerated.

This Edition is being prepared just after the wild outburst of the anti-Socialist clamour of the winter of 1907. Every ignorant fear of the people is being roused by carefully devised and deliberately selected calumny. Socialism, like every pioneer movement, has had its indiscreet advocates who have hailed every other minority encamped in some solitary spot of its own, as a fellow pioneer of the coming golden age of liberty and reason. In addition to that, the minds of some Socialists having become emancipated from the bonds of habit, and having wandered into the realms of pure idea like some ancient colonist who had crossed the frontiers of the settled world, find delight in cutting themselves absolutely adrift from even the precious inheritances of civilised man. The Socialist pioneer has been by no means the only man who has done this. Religion, the family, the State itself—every inherited form of human experience imposing itself upon human conduct by rigid institution and force of habit—have been analysed down to their utilitarian and mean beginnings and have been discarded by eighteenth century rationalists, whose doctrines are to this day in fundamental opposition to Socialism, and by nineteenth century scientists, whose only conception of social progress was a grim struggle for

existence on the part of individuals. But a few Socialist writers have joined them in their revolt, and when, for the meanest of partisan purposes and the most ordinary of commercialist motives, newspapers have raised their voices against the "Socialist menace," these few writers, economically quoted, carefully pruned, and occasionally added to, are held up to a public somewhat ignorant of the intellectual history of their century, as awful warnings of what Socialism must lead to. It is the fate of every man who preaches unfamiliar doctrines to be misunderstood, but the rise of a yellow press which knows neither truth nor honour, now lays him open to be grossly and deliberately misrepresented. The presentation of the idea upon which progress now appears to be moving cannot, however, be finally condemned or approved by the reckless folly of friends or the bitter unscrupulousness of calumniators.

The paragraphs of the book which were evidently out of date since the victories of the Labour Party in 1906, and the change of Government that year, have been altered so as to reflect existing political conditions, and in some instances the argument of the book has been fortified by fuller discussion and new illustrations.

J. Ramsay MacDonald.

August, 1908.

SOCIALISM AND SOCIETY.

Chapter I.

THE PROBLEM.

Poverty still challenges the reason and the conscience of men, and instead of becoming less acute as national wealth increases, it becomes more serious. The results of such investigations as those of Mr. Charles Booth and Mr. Rowntree, and of the Committees which inquired into the prevalence of child labour and the extent of physical deterioration, shatter with the rudest completeness the complacency that one may have acquired from figures showing the astounding totals of national wealth, or the satisfactory averages of personal income. It may not be true literally that the rich are growing richer at a time when the poor are becoming poorer*; but it is an undeniable fact that the lot of the poverty stricken

* This depends upon the length of the period of comparison. If we compare the 14th century with the 19th it is true literally; if we compare 1800 with 1900 it is not true.

becomes more deplorable as the advance of the well-to-do becomes more marked, and that modern conditions of life press with increasing weight upon the propertyless classes. Never was it more true than it is to-day that two civilizations exist side by side in every industrial country—the civilization of the idle or uselessly employed rich, and the civilization of the industrial poor.

Pauperism is perhaps the least alarming form and the most misleading index of poverty. Wrecks lifting their broken spars up to heaven are less woful than unseaworthy ships tossing helplessly on stormy waters. Moreover, the existence of numerous charitable and subsidising agencies, together with the increasing expenditure of municipal authorities upon work which is in the nature of relief, and the operation of Distress Committees working under the provisions of the Unemployed Workmen's Act, show that the flood of poverty has altogether overflowed the embankments which the Poor Law has provided to contain it.

When we survey modern conditions in search of a point from which to begin and trace out the tangled and tortuous path of poverty, we naturally fix upon the silent village and the deserted field. Our rural districts are depopulated; the rural districts of every commercial country are emptying

their people into the cities, and as the sources of healthy manhood are depleted, the reserve forces of the race are drained off. Commissions sit and report upon the physique of the people, and their conclusions, bad enough in all conscience, might be worse. For, the nerves of the people, not being subject to foot-rule measurement, or pound avoirdupois weighing, are not taken into account, and the morals of the people are left to be gossiped about by sensation mongers, or be sported with by sectarians, and are not made the subject of cold, impartial investigation.*

The whole subject of the vital condition of the people is too often supposed to be thoroughly dealt with when satisfactory figures of death rates† and enticing photographs of improved houses are given, and

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* Only the fringe of this question is touched in the investigations which Mr. Booth has carried on in London and Mr. Rowntree in York. Police Court records and Lunatic Asylum reports form a considerable literature upon the subject however. Durkheim's *Le Suicide*: *Etude de Sociologie*; Duprat's *Les Causes Social de la Folie* and similar works on social pathology enable us to understand the strength of the inner currents in our present civilization flowing towards destruction—currents which have a social and not individual source.

† But, be it noted, that one of the most important sections of vital statistics, the rates of infant mortality, shows no improvement for the last half-century.

thus the fact is obscured that in spite of all sanitary and similar improvements, the vital energies, the stamina, the mental cleanliness, the moral robustness of our race are suffering, not for this or that special reason, but because the complete setting of life is barren, wearisome and exhausting to human beings.

I need mention but one cause of this. The better organisation of the functions of production has been of necessity attended by a quickening of pace, and by a heavier draft upon the energies of the producers. More life is consumed in production—in fact, so much life is consumed in this, that little is left to be spent in other concerns. Old age and the inefficiency of years come sooner than they used to do. The squeezing of the orange is done more quickly and more thoroughly now.

Nor is this merely a workman's grievance, for everyone affected by the industrial changes which have marked the Liberal*

* It may be advisable to state specifically that I am frequently to use the word "Liberal," as I do here, not in its political but epochal sense. It indicates that period of social evolution when capital, freed from the political and social dominance of Feudalism, developed a political, economic and social policy in accordance with its own nature. The keynote of the epoch is individual liberty of the unreal, atomic kind; its political characteristic is enfranchisement, its economic is competition, and its social is wealth.

epoch has suffered in the same way. The workman suffers from periodic unemployment and from a chronic uncertainty of being able to make ends meet. This re-acts upon his personal habits so that he follows the allurements of intemperance, or seeks pleasure in the risks of gambling, loses his sense of craftsmanship and his unwillingness to work dishonestly, is driven into the loafing habit through frequent unemployment, and finally becomes a machine which turns out a minimum amount of work at a maximum price. We may regret this as much as we like, and blame the workman as much as we care, but this is the natural consequence of a state of society in which private interests control industrial capital, in which the land and the instruments of production belong to a class different from that which uses them, in which the predominant relationship between the employer and the workman is that of a contract to do work at a price, and in which there is no response and no appeal to moral and spiritual motives. The capitalist also suffers from insecurity caused, not always by mistakes or faults of his own, but by the competitive moves of his rivals. He is part of a machine which grinds him just as remorselessly as it grinds the wage-earner. In France,* twenty per cent. of

* Leroy Beaulieu, *Répartition des Richesses,* chap. xi.

the businesses started disappear at once: in America,† ninety per cent. of business men fail either absolutely or relatively; and though Marshall contends‡ that business risks are decreasing in this country, the probable truth is that they are only changing their character, as financial cases in the Law Courts appear to show. Moreover, the improvements in methods of production, the concentration of capital, the development of means of communication, the opening up of the world's markets, and the increasing number of nations taking part in international competition, put an ever tightening pressure upon the capitalist, and demand that more and more of his life's energies shall be spent in business. Although the statute book teaches him business morality and protects him against certain forms of unprincipled and anti-social competition (like adulterated goods and long hours), he is compelled to drive the sharpest bargains, to adopt methods of business which he could not employ honourably in personal relations, and to cross far too frequently the line of dishonesty. He can indulge in few sentiments; he cannot enjoy very much of the luxury of morality. Business is a war in

† Wells, *Recent Economic Changes*, London, 1891, p. 351.

‡ Marshall, *Principles of Economics*, London, 1898, i., p. 703.

which he whose nerves are not always well strung, whose eye is not always fixed upon the vigilant enemy, and whose heart is not always prepared to drive home every advantage, is likely to be overborne. The purpose which must dominate the morality and the thought of the business man is a favourable balance sheet, and only in so far as an exercise of the finer sentiments does not adversely influence that summary of trading operations, can he give way to them.

The result is inevitable. The arts languish, the vulgar empire of plutocracy extends its gilded borders, luxurious indulgence takes the place of comfort, selfish pursuits that of public spirit, philanthropic effort that of just dealing.

We are accustomed to regard the present as a state of individualism, but no delusion could be more grotesque. Nothing is rarer in Society to-day than individuality. It is doubtful if ever there was less individuality amongst us than there is at the present moment. One has only to look on whilst the sons of the *nouveaux riches* spend their money, or whilst the crowds which our industrial quarters have disgorged enjoy themselves, to appreciate the meaningless monotony of our pleasure. From our furniture, made by the thousand pieces by machines, to our religion, stereotyped in set formulæ and

pursued by clock-work methods, individuality is an exceptional characteristic. In the production of wealth, owing to the differentiation of processes, there is less and less play for individuality, and as this more exclusively occupies the time and thought of both employers and employed, uniformity spreads its deadening hand over Society, the sense of proper discrimination is lost, and at the same time imitation becomes a social factor of increasing power, respectability becomes more securely enthroned as the mentor of conduct, and a drab level of fairly comfortable mediocrity is the standard to which we conform. Nothing is, indeed, more absurd than an argument in support of the present state of Society, based on the assumption that as we move away from it in the direction of Socialism we are leaving individuality and individual liberty behind.

Liberty and regular employment—the fitting of men to the work which they can do best—can be secured only when the various functions of the social organism—the capitalistic and labouring, the consuming and producing—are all co-ordinated. At present each function is self-centred. It is as though the appetite, the head or the muscles of the human body worked each for itself—as indeed sometimes happens in the case of gluttons, hair splitters, or slaves. But then

we know the consequences. There is an interruption in the general health and growth. There is a dwarfing of some parts and an abnormal development of others. The body rebels periodically, and teaches the functions that only when they take their proper places in the whole, and act obediently, not to their own appetites, but to the needs of the complete organism, do they enjoy an unbroken and a full satisfaction.

We can best express this failure of present-day Society to enrich all its classes not merely with worldly possessions but with character and capacity to employ leisure time, by describing modern conditions as being poverty-stricken. For to judge the prevalence of poverty merely by returns of income or deposits in savings banks, is like judging a piece of architecture by the size of the stones used in the building.

We have a vast accumulation of actual physical want. Mr. Booth says that about 30 per cent. of the London population must be classified amongst that accumulation; and if it is not relatively growing, it is not actually decreasing. We seem to have reached the maximum of improvement which the existing social organisation can yield. Further ameliorative efforts of a purely reforming character can produce little fruit. Our social machinery apparently cannot employ more than 97½ per cent. of the willing

workers at best, and it cannot raise more than from 70 to 80 per cent. of our people above the "poverty line." In addition to that, our Society bears a still greater accumulation of mental and moral poverty, and apparently this is increasing rather than decreasing.

Such are the conditions which challenge the social reformer. They cannot be the final state of social evolution. There must be another state ahead of us less marked by failure, less chaotic, better organised, and the question is, how are we to move into it ? It appears to be the special task of the twentieth century to discover a means of co-ordinating the various social functions so that the whole community may enjoy robust health, and its various organs share adequately in that health. But this is nothing else than the aim of Socialism.

Chapter II.

SOCIETY AND THE INDIVIDUAL.

It is of the utmost importance, at the very outset, to understand with definite clearness to what type of unity societies and communities of men belong, because otherwise we cannot judge what the relations between the individual and Society, between conduct and law, ought to be ; how the various activities within Society—*e.g.*, trade and commerce, education, &c., should be regarded ; whether professions should bring profits to individuals, or be functions contributing life to the whole; what the State is, and what its sphere ought to be; what the nature of individual liberty is.

If men live together, forming tribes, nations, communities, societies, like stones accumulated in heaps, Society is only a collection of separate men, laws are only rules preventing their hard corners from knocking against the sides of their neighbours, the State exists only to maintain the heap (and not that necessarily). In such a unity the individual man alone counts. Individualism must be the predominating idea. Liberty is the freedom of action of the individual,

and is a thing of quantity, every limit imposed on its extent—as for instance the legal command, "Thou shalt not kill"—being a curtailment of it.

If, however, Society is a unity of the organic kind, totally different conclusions follow. The individuals composing it are still separate and conscious, but they depend very largely upon the Society in which they live for their thoughts, their tastes, their liberties, their opportunities of action, their character—in brief, for everything summed up in the word civilisation. It is in Society, and not in the individual, that the accumulation of the race experience is found. Liberty is a matter of quality and not of quantity, and curtailment of its limits does not necessarily lessen its amplitude. The community enters at every point into the life of the individual, and the State function is not merely to secure life, but to promote good life. Individual development is conditioned by State organisation and efficiency.

How far do these theoretical distinctions agree with the actual facts? How far, to begin with, is the life of the individual organically connected with that of his Society?

I.

Put an individual from a well developed Society into the midst of a different civilisa-

tion, or place him in wild nature, and he is helpless in proportion as the Society to which he belongs is advanced.* Paralyse in a well developed Society all the life which it has inherited from the past—its economic machinery, its legal processes, its institutions of every kind—and the individual is left more helpless than the primitive savage catching fish with his shell hooks. The present is rooted in the past; the future can be dragged away from neither.

An individualist psychology exaggerates the free play of the human will and denies the organic type of Society mainly on the ground that each individual in Society has an independent will and consciousness of his own. In the organism, consciousness is concentrated in a small part of the whole—the brain or nervous system; in Society consciousness is diffused throughout, and no specialised function of feeling can be created. This, Spencer calls a cardinal difference. But upon examination the difference appears to be not nearly so great as it seems at first.†

* The reason why the sailor is a "handy man" is that a ship's crew is a type of a primitive form of Society.

† It is not within the scope of this political study to discuss this point fully, but I cannot help thinking that at this point Spencer sacrificed his philosophy

The cells that are ultimately differentiated to become the nerve systems of organisms are the ordinary cells which go to make up organic tissue, and they differ from muscular cells no more than a doctor physiologically differs from an agricultural labourer.

Moreover, the work of organic nerve systems is paralleled in Society by political functions as the Socialist conceives them. The function of the nervous system is to co-ordinate the body to which it belongs, and enable it to respond to impressions and experiences received at every point. It can also originate movement itself. Evidently the individualist cannot admit any such differentiated organ in Society. But the Socialist, on the other hand, sees its necessity. Some organ must enable other organs and the mass of Society to communicate impressions and experiences to a receiving centre, must carry from that centre impulses leading to action, must originate on its own initiative organic movements calculated to bring some benefit or pleasure to the organism. This is the Socialist view of the political organ on its legislative and administrative sides. It gathers up experience, carries it to a centre which decides

to his individualism, and Huxley's lamentable surrender in the Romanes Lecture of his previous position was owing to his failure to estimate accurately how small this difference is.

corresponding movements, and then carries back to the parts affected the impulse of action.

Upon this point the psychological sociologists do not face facts. "Within aggrega-"tions of men, mental activities are con-"tinually asserting themselves, and working "themselves out in conformity to psycho-"logical law. In this process the human "mind, aware of itself, deliberately forms "and carries out policies for the organisa-"tion and perfection of social life, in order "that the great end of Society, the perfec-"tion of the individual personality, may be "completely attained."* The distinction here set up between thought and nature by the expression "in conformity to psycho-"logical law," in spite of the writer's protests to the contrary, leaves the problem at its most interesting point. What is the relation between psychological and biological law as factors in human evolution? What is the scope of biological law? Did the psychological process of evolution appear only with man? Undoubtedly the mind of man moulds society, but only just as the mind of the animal assists its biological evolution. The difference is of degree, not of kind. So that, if we begin to assume the

* Giddings, *The Elements of Sociology*, London, 1897, p. 150.

airs of the psychological sociologist, we must regard the evolution of the whole universe as psychological, and when we refer to biology we include psychology in our idea all the time. The truth is that man's power to influence the social organisation in which he is placed is limited to the biological method of influencing and changing functions. The simple fact that the changing impact is a human will, does not make the change or its method psychological.

The view taken of Society by the individualist psychologist is that which the cell in the organic body might be expected to take of its own liberty and importance. We now know that the cell has an individuality of its own, and we can imagine the strenuous efforts made by cell philosophers to prove that the body existed for them, and that the modifying and moving force in the organism was the individual cell.*

We over-rate our individual importance in these matters. When we build our houses,

* There is less of the purely fanciful in these considerations than we may be inclined to think at first. Recent investigations into the nature of cells, and recent speculations, based upon scientifically observed facts as to the meaning of cell activity—as, for instance, Binet's *Psychic Life of Micro-Organisms*—point to a fulness of cell life which foreshadows many of the characteristics of the higher animals—such as memory, will, fear, &c.

use the facilities of modern town life, become enraptured with our religious consolations, contemplate the productions of our art, or plunge into the speculations of our divine philosophies, we seldom think that all these precious possessions and exercises belong to Society and not to the individual, and that when the individual employs them he is in reality putting to use possessions which he cannot keep for himself, which he did almost nothing to acquire, which he can do little more than protect from rusting and corrupting, and which he simply has the privilege of borrowing for usury. Throughout our lives we are but as men feasting at the common table of a bountiful lord, and when we bear in the dishes of the feast or gather up the crumbs which have fallen from the boards, we pride ourselves on our wealth and the magnificent reward which our labour has brought to us. When, in time, we die, however, our vacant place is of little consequence. Everything we have done, everything we were, becomes social property, and our life is of value mainly in so far as it has contributed to the fulness of social life and the development of social organisation and efficiency. This is borne in upon us with irresistible force when we think of the few individuals whose memories are rescued from the grave. Our *Dictionary of National Biography* makes a grand dis-

play on our library shelves, but when we think of its great array of volumes whilst we are in the midst of the crowded market-place or in the streaming thoroughfares where humanity flows like a tide, what a puny collection it seems! What vast echoless generations does it suggest! What millions of nameless ghosts gather round its few pages of imperishable names!

The "being" that lives, that persists, that develops, is Society; the life upon which the individual draws that he himself may have life, liberty and happiness is the social life. The likeness between Society and an organism like the human body is complete in so far as Society is the total life from which the separate cells draw their individual life. Man is man only in Society.

There appears to be a cell consciousness different from the consciousness of the organised body with its specialised brain and nervous system: there is a social consciousness with its sensory and motor system superimposed on the individual consciousness: both together make up the real individual consciousness.

II.

This dependence of the individual upon the form and nature of the social organisation

also determines the individual's function. As the organisation of Society changes, men's functions in it change also. The great divisional epochs of sociology—primæval and early society, the mediæval age and modern times—were distinguished by certain general characteristics of tribal and national life expressing itself in different forms of social organisation which determined the modes of thought, the economic pursuits, and the relative values of social functions, classes and men, and which settled whether men and classes were regarded from the point of view of status and subordination, or of equality and liberty. Man, himself, has been the same thing, has been built upon practically the same principles of physiology and psychology as he now is, right through human history. But it would have been as absurd to claim equality for him in the feudal age as it would be to claim a free and absolutely separate individuality for the cells in his own body. His status was determined by the social organisation of his time. When his tribe became a part of a nation, his political function was changed; when his nation moved from its military to its commercial stage, he had to be the weaver and the iron-worker instead of the man-at-arms, and his status was changed accordingly. As a workman in the commercial epoch, he finds

his function in society altered with every machine that is invented. The boot and shoe operative of to-day is almost as different from the boot and shoe operative of fifty years ago as the stomach of the bell animalcule is from that of man. Every improvement in locomotion, everything which breaks down international barriers and opens up the world, every extension of markets, every attempt to reorganise industry by the more effective use of capital, every vital impulse given to the country to empty itself into the town, changes men's functions, alters their relations to each other and to Society, implants new habits, new virtues and new vices in them, gives them new ideals to guide conduct, modifies their body, and impresses itself generally upon the race.

III.

All this change has come not because any individual or combination of individuals has sought it, but because someone, impelled by the possibilities which the social organism offered for a modification of its functions, and by the creative opportunities which circumstances gave to thought and will, altered the organisation of Society—for instance, by labour saving machinery—at this point or that, with the result that the whole organism had to re-adjust itself to the change.

When Stephenson made his steam engine he had no thought of the social results of his action, except in its immediate consequences as an improvement in hauling machinery, and yet how fundamentally has Stephenson's engine changed men. A study of history shows, not the free play of the individual will in determining the character and direction of human activities, but the almost absolute control of the social organism. The Great Man has undoubtedly modified that organism now and again—the soldier, the preacher, the thinker, the inventor, the organiser of industry,—but the results of these men's work have not been gained as a direct influence on their fellows, but through a modification of the structure of society, and by the consequent change of the functions which individuals are called upon to perform. To the sum total of these modifications many small changes have contributed much more than a few great alterations.

War, the most revolutionary force of all, has had to lower its flags to the persistent doggedness of Society (if the expression may be used) in going its own way. The inroads of Rome upon the rest of Europe left less permanent results than was at one time supposed. The incursion of the barbaric armies from the North upon Italy had no greater effect than a violent storm has upon

a vigorous sapling; little that was permanent followed the partition treaties and edicts which marked the triumph and sealed the downfall of Napoleon; few real organic changes were effected by the destructive hurricanes of the French Revolution. After the war which was to do so much to revolutionise the social and political life of South Africa, the country began to develop from the point it had reached before the war broke out, and upon lines but little different from those laid down before war was thought about, and the recent Transvaal election (1907) created a position practically similar to that which was evolving months before war was declared. Violence in dealing with things rooted in history, or organically related to Society, is a waste of time. Effect, of course, all these revolutions had, but how little compared with the furies that accompanied them and the tremendous efforts which were consumed by them. And as the pre-revolution and post-revolution times are minutely examined, although change may have been rapid (as indeed change from one variety of a species to another, as in flower culture for instance, often is), the continuity between the old and the new is well marked.*

* This opinion, so contrary to the views of the Radical writers of the last two or three generations, is becoming a commonplace in sober history—the

Or, to approach my argument from the point of view of another class of considerations, we may consider how very little difference there is between the Republican United States and the Monarchical Great Britain, and that what difference exists is owing not to Declarations of Independence, but to the differences in social organisation, which are caused by the fact that one is a new country and the other an old one, and that one had a prairie up to yesterday, and the other has had none for many a generation.

Just in proportion as an organism has

history where colour and movement are subordinated to the actual facts. These revolutionary epochs, these ditches supposed to be dug across history, do not bear examination. Even what we Westerns have been taught to regard as the greatest of all these ditches, that dividing Paganism from Christianity, hardly exists. In the chapter, *Some thoughts on the Transition from Paganism to Christianity,* in Professor Bernard Bosanquet's *The Civilization of Christendom,* the subject is dealt with in accordance both with what I have written above and also of the views I express later on regarding the growth of political parties. Mr. Bryce in his *Holy Roman Empire* (chap. iii.) summarises the effect of the barbaric invasion in these words: "It is hardly too "much to say that the thought of antagonism to the "Empire and the wish to extinguish it never crossed "the minds of the barbarians." Surely no one who knows European history will dispute the view that the partition of Europe by the representatives of the

grown slowly and developed through many generations does it offer resistance to change and are revolutions within it ineffective. It is stable: forced growths are unstable. Every gardener knows that. The Revolutionary elements in Europe have not been suppressed merely by the perfection of the scientific precision of armaments—certainly an important factor—but by the re-establishment of nationalities and systems of government on the same footing as they existed, or were beginning to exist, before Europe was upset by the impact of the French Revolution and the wars which fol-

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Powers at Vienna resulted in the wars which Germany, Italy, Austria and France have undergone to break down the artificial arrangements of Metternich and his masters. Radical writers have altogether exaggerated the real influence of the French Revolution. Its effect upon law was supposed to be one of its most blessed contributions to European history, but according to Professor Villet, corroborated by Professor Maitland (*Cambridge Modern History*, vol. viii., p. 753), "the Revolution-"ary Epoch manifests a truth, which no historian of "whatsoever school ever expressed more felicitously "and clearly than Portalis in the preliminary dis-"course of the Civil Code: 'The Codes of nations "'are the work of time; properly speaking, they are "'not made.' . . . French legislation in the "century just passed . . . is the result of histori-"cal forces, and no mere invention or artificial "creation." Exactly the same is true of social and political France. In our own history, the Norman

lowed it. European Governments have become more stable than they were because they have ceased to be the artificial creations of conquests and have become the products of historical evolution.

The cause of progress is, that the individual, endowed with possibilities of action by his ancestors, is launched into Society—the race—to receive from it the impress and the impact of its inherited qualities, and thus by the play and interplay of the individual and social inheritance, of the individual and social dynamic, change in a systematic sequence of stages is carried on, the biological law of natural selection being modified by the conflicting requirements of human reason.

IV.

The influence of the individual upon Society is of two kinds. There are in the first place, the rearrangements in social

Conquest is generally supposed to have made "all things new," but the study of historical details robs it of much of its dramatic effect. For instance, it used to be credited with the simplification of our English Grammar, but as Mr. Badley, writing in the *Cambridge History of English Literature,* shows, this view "is now abandoned by all scholars. . . . In the main . . . [this grammatical change] is to be ascribed to internal agencies."

functions which result from a reorganisation of industrial structure consequent upon invention,—*e.g.* the application of steam power to processes of production and exchange. Then there is the bombardment of social structure carried on by the disquietude and discontent of individuals who demand from Society better moral results than Society in its existing constitution can give. The work of the Utopians belongs to this second class of effort.

This second moulding force is to be much stronger in the future than it has been in the past, because it cannot come into full play until political democracy is established.* The people must gain possession of the State before the moral shortcomings in the working of Society become dissociated from other questions, and present clear political and social issues. The first comprehensive problem which faces an industrial and enfranchised democracy is how to make Society conform in its functioning to the moral standards of the individual. The moral sense of the individual, consequently, is constantly attacking a morally inefficient state of Society, and acts as a modifying

* After political democracy has been established in a few countries, others more backward politically may, however, carry on their socio-moral agitations at the same time as they carry on their political ones. Russia is a case in point.

force upon it, hastening and guiding its development.

Political programmes to-day are being moulded by the demand, emanating from the individual conscience, that Society should do justice, that merit should be rewarded, that the righteous should not need to beg for bread. If the righteous cannot find a market, either for their labour or the fruits of their labour, the defenders of the present chaos say that the righteous must starve. But this answer satisfies nobody. The questio continues to be asked why the right eous cannot find a market? and the question is repeated whether the righteous are fools or imbeciles, or honest but baffled and unfortunate men. Men will not be satisfied with a non-moral answer to a moral question. Descriptive economics will not sooth the enquiring moral intelligence. The dissatisfied moral nature will simply turn to Society and demand it to set its house in order so that the righteous may have a market and be saved from begging for their bread.

It must be remembered in estimating the power of this modifying influence that it does not depend for practical success upon the numbers of its conscious advocates, but upon the clearness of its thought and the justness of its presentation. The people are moved by the vision. Even hum-drum

politics, barren and dusty because of self-interest, show that. Majorities are determined by hopes and fears far more than by gratitude for things done. In a sense Jerichos are not taken by assault; their walls fall down at the blast of trumpets. Moral truth comes like the dawn, not like an army of conquest. It cannot be energetically opposed after it has been discovered. "Thrice is he armed who hath his quarrel just"—if the fact that justice is on his side be recognised by his opponent.

So, when the time comes for a further effort on the part of Society to protect itself, the step to be taken must be one which not only unifies the organism more completely, and which makes its organs work more in co-operation and less in competition with each other, but also one which promises to satisfy more fully the demand that social action and individual action should approximate to the same standards of morality. The satisfying of the moral sense of the individual and the economising of effort in Society must proceed hand in hand in progressive social evolution.

The development of social structure more accurately embodies and satisfies the moral demands of the individual as we approach the time when Society is prepared to be modified in accordance with the dreams of

the Utopians. Education liberates the individual will and intelligence so that they are increasingly effective in producing the machinery necessary for economy of social effort; this reacts upon individual morality, and makes it more exacting in its demands upon Society, because the individual himself is then surrounded by social circumstances which press closer and closer upon him the necessity of undergoing the discipline of will and intelligence which makes character —the necessity which justifies the thousand and one movements aimed at improving human qualities. This play and interplay of social organisation and individual will and character, seem to me to indicate to us the accurate view of the scope and method of individual action in Society.

v.

But the great reservoir of inheritance is the race and not the individual. When one considers in detail how much the social ego controls individual action, the moulding power of the race seems to be limitless. The generation into which a man happens to have been born, the social circles in which he moves, the character of the vital moulding forces which play upon him in accordance as he lives in a suburb or in the centre of a city, the etiquette (settled genera-

tions before and now largely irrational) of the profession to which he belongs, the tenure of an office round which traditions have grown up, the very language he uses, are influences which haunt him as persistently as his shadow, and do more than anything else to determine the tenor of his life and thought. But they are all drawn, not from the reservoir of individual, but of social, inheritance.

This error of under-estimating the influence of social inheritance upon individual life has led to the very grave practical mistakes of political and moral individualism. It has been characteristic of the Liberal epoch to regard the individual as a separate, self-contained, creative being, bedecked in the regal garments of possessions and rights. This individualism has received the homage of a century whose interests, pursuits and problems prevented it from seeing individuality in all its relations. No age has been less fitted than the nineteenth century to value the common life, to find contentment in working in singleness of heart for the good of the whole, to be at peace in a prosperous organism. But at last the falseness of this individualistic emphasis is being recognised. On its moral side it is not bringing peace, it is not advancing the frontiers of the kingdom of right-

eousness. On its political side, whence it has yielded the greatest amount of gain, it now stands baffled by the problems of State authority. On its industrial side it has divorced economics from life and has failed absolutely to solve the problem of distribution. The code of laws imposing with ever-increasing stringency upon traders and manufacturers the elementary principles of honesty and fair dealing, grows steadily, and every addition is a fresh impeachment of self-regarding individualism as the basis of conduct. The gulf between rich and poor, the periodical breakdown of the modern industrial machine causing wide-spread destitution, the sinister economic mechanism by which the owners of monopolies—especially of land—can claim an extra toll every time that communal wisdom and conscience adopt some scheme to alleviate the lot of the most hardly pressed classes, conclusively show that Society does not yet meet the requirements of human standards of use and value.

On the other hand every attempt to correct the shortcomings of what has been the dominant type of individualism—except the attempts of charity either organised or disorganised—tends to supplant the type. The individual in search of liberty finds that the ideas and the claims contained in the modern expression "individualism" only

mislead him. The individualism of the Factory Laws, of the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Acts, of Weights and Measures and Adulteration Statutes, is an individualism taught to find outlets for its energy in social directions, an individualism disciplined by and co-ordinated with the requirements of man's social nature. In such administrative rules, as those of public authorities to provide in contracts that fair wages must be paid for work done, we observe the same movement in operation, laying down conditions under which the individual must be, not a wild buccaneer, but a humble co-operator in society, seeking peace in service and wealth in sharing. The acquiring self-regarding *I* is an altogether imperfect realisation of the human ego.

In fact, disguise it from ourselves as we may, in our so-called "practical" moments, every conception of what morality is—except neurotic and erotic whims like those of Nietzsche or antiquated pre-scientific notions like those of the Charity Organisation Society—assumes that the individual is embedded organically in his social medium, and that, therefore, the individual end can be gained only by promoting the social end; that the individual is primarily a cell in the organism of his Society;* that he is

* I am not discussing here what the scope of individualism is. The individual is by no means "a

not an absolute being, but one who develops best in relation to other beings and who discovers the true meaning of his ego only when he has discovered the organic oneness of Society. "Man rises from the life of his "petty self to that of his family, his tribe, "and his race, mankind, finding his greater "self each time in these"†

VI.

Two difficulties still remain, having a bearing on the purpose of this study. The form of an organism is the result of its past racial experience in the struggle for life, and has been moulded by the same forces which have determined the functions to be performed by its organs.

Has Society a form? Unless it has, it is

quiescent cell." He has a law of his own being, an evolution of his own, and an individual as well as a social end. A fear lest I am denying all this can arise only from an imperfect view of what the life of a cell in an organism is. All I am insisting upon here is, that in any adequate system of individualism, the fact that liberty and freedom of action (involving right to possess and so on) must be conditioned by social considerations *in the interests of the individual himself,* has to be recognised, and the system constructed accordingly.

† Carpenter. *The Art of Creation*, London, 1904, p. 192.

impossible to conceive of organic functions being performed by the individual and groups of individuals.

Society has no bodily form like a plant, or an elephant, or man himself. But here again it is more the appearance than the reality that is wanting. For, after all, organic form is only useful for holding together the relationship of organs. The human body, for instance, is not essentially a form composed of head, trunk, and legs: it is essentially a relationship of various organs which, in co-operation, compose a living unity of the human type. If we piece together two legs, two arms, a head, and a trunk, with their organs, we have a bodily form, but no organic unity. But if these organs are joined in that relationship which we call living, it would not matter whether they were in actual contact or not—whether they had form or not. If the characteristic vital relationship were still possible, they, in that relationship, would be an organism. A vital relationship between organs, not a bodily form containing these organs, constitutes an organism.

Society is of such a type. Its organs are connected by a living tissue of law, of habit and custom, of economic inter-dependence, of public opinion, of political unity: and these living connections maintain the stability of relationship between organs

precisely as bodily form does. In that tissue the individual and the class are not embedded as stones in lime, but live as cells or organs in a body. That living tissue on the other hand, is modified in biological fashion by external and internal impulses, needs and influences, arising from the experience of the whole organism. It lives when the individuals die and preserves its vitality, identity and authority, after the component cells and organs of any given moment have all disappeared and given place to others. Law survives generation after generation (just as the human body, with its three score and ten years of life, may be said, from the cell point of view, to survive generations of cells), obtaining from people, unborn when the Statutes were passed, as much reverence and obedience as from those who helped to pass them. So with custom, public opinion, habits, mental attributes, institutions. The individual is part of them. They are the life into which he is born; their pulse regulates the beating of his; their qualities determine his own.

The second difficulty is, that Society is not self-conscious. As a matter of fact, Society is keenly self-conscious. For, what are law and custom but evidence of the self-consciousness of Society? And, as Society approaches a greater definiteness in

organic relationships, its self-consciousness will become more accurate and pass more under its control.

VII.

Hence it is that the laws governing the existence and growth of human Society could not be understood until biological science was sufficiently far advanced to explain with tolerable fulness of detail, the laws which regulate life and its evolution. For Society belongs to the biological type of existence because it is no mere collection of separate individuals, like a heap of sand, but a unified and organised system of relationships in which certain people and classes perform certain functions and others perform other functions, and in which individuals find an existence appropriate to their being by becoming parts of the functioning organs, and by adopting a mode of life and seeking conditions of liberty, not as separate and independent individuals, but as members of their communities.

The chief problems of social life relate to the organisation and development of codes of law, institutions, economic relationships, social ethics, public opinion; they include the growth and decay of functions, the development and deterioration of organs and their relationship to the total life of the organ-

ism, the gradation from one stage of organisation to another by internal modifications —*e.g.*, from primitive to mediæval and on to modern Society, and the persistence of a social individuality after the composing personal units have passed out of existence.

The chief difference between the social organism and the animal organism is, that whilst the latter, in the main, is subject to the slowly acting forces expressed in the laws of natural evolution, the former is much more largely—though not nearly so largely as some people imagine, and in a less and less degree as it becomes matured (another organic characteristic)—under the sway of the comparatively rapidly moving and acting human will. This gives the former an elasticity for change which the other does not possess. But the type of its organisation, the relations between its various organs and the mode of their functioning—and it is with these alone that I have to deal in this book—are biological.

Chapter III.

THE ECONOMIC PERIOD.

If we are to consider, with any profit, what are the imperfections of existing Society and what is the law of its further evolution, we must begin by reminding ourselves that there is a law of mutual aid in life as well as one of a struggle for existence, and that the former is predominant in human Society.

The struggle for life, fought on the individualistic plane at first, is ultimately transferred to the social. One of the very first results of the individual struggle with nature and with other individuals, is to create groups of individuals for mutual protection. This is a law of life from the cell to the mammal. Mutual aid thus becomes as important a factor in evolution as the struggle for life. The law of group existence and development blends with that of individual existence and development to weave the pattern of progress.

The study of mutual aid therefore leads us to examine group organisation with a view to ascertaining what is the position of the

individual within the group, how its organisation affects his liberty, and how far every member within it contributes to its efficiency. Socialism in one of its aspects, is a criticism of Society from the point of view of mutual aid, and the formation of a policy in accordance with the laws of mutual aid.

I.

One of the chief characteristics of existing Society is the incoherence of its functions. It is a machine which is always getting out of gear, as is shown by alternating periods of overwork and unemployment, excessive riches and despairing poverty, enormous gross income and appalling records of destitution and pauperism. Its productive and distributive functions are not organised so as to serve the common wellbeing, but are working for their own special interests.* They are, therefore, competitive. It is as though a stomach performed its functions,

* It is interesting to note, as an addendum to the discussion on how the individual is organically connected with his society, that in fulfilling the particular end which contemporary society is striving to attain (in the present day, the production of wealth), the individual is valued just as he succeeds in making that end his own (in the present day, amassing wealth), and he manages to square his conscience to any immoral acts which may promote his success in this direction.

not as part of a body, but as an organ conscious only of its separate existence, and thinking primarily of that existence.

At present each separate organ preys upon all the others. True, it must to some extent, and in some indirect way, serve the community, for preying must not be too rapacious or the organ preyed upon will die. The landlord cannot exact too much rent, or industry will move elsewhere: the employer cannot cut wages too low or he will be unable to command skill and physique. The workman cannot demand too high wages or he will give an incentive to capital to break up labour combinations, introduce machinery and otherwise rearrange industrial processes. But in all this there is no working of a social organism balancing services and distributing awards. There is an exercise of judgment in determining how far one organ can safely go in preying upon another; there is a call for diplomatic skill. But that is all. The laws which govern this relationship are of the same kind as those which govern the relationship between the shearer and the sheep.

To establish an organic relationship,—a relationship by which each, contributing co-operatively to the life of the whole, may share in that life,—has now become the task of Society. This task, become the subject

of a political propaganda and the guide of social change, is known as Socialism. Socialism is therefore not an abstract idea, nor a scheme of logical perfection, nor an acutely designed new social mechanism, nor a *tour de force* of the creative intelligence. It is the next stage in social growth. It is a proposal for the settlement of the problems which the present stage has raised in consequence of its success in settling those which met it at its beginning. The vital forces to which the present stage has given birth, but which it cannot nourish, must nevertheless realise themselves, and will create social conditions to enable them to do so.

II.

History is a progression of social stages which have preceded and succeeded each other like the unfolding of life from the amœba to the mammal, or from the bud to the fruit. To-day we are in the economic stage. Yesterday, we were in the political stage. To-morrow, we shall be in the moral* stage. To-day individual property and economic interest are the predominating influences upon society; yesterday, the predominating influence was national organisation—the necessity of national solidarity;

* I use the words to characterise man's responsibility to both his intelligence and his conscience.

to-morrow it will be justice, tempered by the virtues of sympathy. In other words, the course of evolution has been, the making of communities, the exploitation of nature, the cultivation of men.* At no time, however, are these epochs divided from each other by hard and fast lines. At any moment a war may throw a nation back upon the first epoch when national self defence would subordinate every other consideration, whilst we have frequent reminders that economic success cannot be pursued absolutely without regard to moral considerations.

The political epoch is marked by the subordination of the individual and his right to

* There are two remarkable inconsistencies between the general sociological position taken up by Marx and Engels, and their persistent assertion of the economic basis of history, which should be pointed out here. In the first place they agreed that Hegel's greatest claim to fame was his demonstration that "the whole world," as Engels expresses it in *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (p. 36), "natural, historical, intellectual, is represented as a process, *i.e.*, "as in constant motion, change, transformation, development." If that be true, is it conceivable that every department of life—"natural, historical, intellectual," (by-the-by a very slipshod division)—is chained to economics and cannot attain an independent development and existence of its own? In the second place Marx's insistence that each epoch has its own characteristic law of development is inconsistent with the assertion that economic considerations are the prime movers in historic evolution.

liberty and property, to the national or tribal need for a head—a central nerve nucleus—connected with the mass of the people by certain differentiated baron classes—nerve fibres and ganglia. The moral epoch will be marked by the complete emancipation of man so that he becomes master of himself—that self including the necessities of life, labour, and everything it requires for its existence and expression.

Whatever may have been the particular circumstances under which the various communities have been formed, they have all grown owing to the necessity of self-defence. A strong central organisation was imperative, and this organisation had to be linked up to the masses around, by some aristocratic and military class of leaders subordinate to the head.*

In this process of unification we have the family joining with others to form, or itself growing into, the clan or tribe, and the clan or tribe, partly by internal energy—*i.e.*, voluntary impulse—partly by external compulsion—*i.e.*, conquest—joining others to form a nation. For a time, the integrating forces are resented and opposed by the disintegrating sentiment and tradition of the clan. History is then a record of conflict

* It is a well-established fact that uncivilised tribes which are governed on a monarchic plan are most successful in war, and consequently survive best.

between central and local authorities, between the integrating and disintegrating forces—the King and the Barons, the nation and the shire or municipality, Parliament and the guild—during which the law of integration asserts itself because the communities which embody it survive. This is the first chapter.

The next chapter is marked by the organisation of the masses into a political unity, and their initiation into the rights of citizenship. The opportunity for progress through this second stage comes first of all from the needs of the central authority,*—the sovereign—to maintain its position against the local and clan disintegrating forces, or against rival sovereigns. This leads to the establishment of some measure of political and economic freedom for the plebeians—in other words, a nerve connection between the central nucleus and the surrounding mass.

* This connection between social need and political power is brought into great prominence by the study of ancient and mediæval democracies, especially of the city republics. In Carthage, democracy increased its powers with Hannibal's military exploits; in Rome, the power of the commons increased as the armies of the commons became necessary to rival rulers. The struggle between Emperor and Pope started the Italian cities upon their careers as independent republics. The political movement in Russia since the war with Japan is an interesting illustration of the same principle.

Meanwhile, the mass itself ceases to be amorphous and becomes differentiated into functions, *i.e.*, trades and classes. The economic stage is beginning; the political one is fading away into the accomplished past. But the process of political integration continues.

The municipium, at first merely the wattled place of refuge for the people scattered on the soil, becomes a market, a centre of industry, a depôt, a chartered community, a society, enjoying widening powers of self-government. The individuals composing it are divided into this trade or that. Some men, and finally a class of men, acquire control of the means of production—the tools and economic opportunities necessary to an industrial community; they get credit or acquire capital; and from the time that the producer has to depend upon a distant market either for his raw material or for the sale of his produce, a separate class becomes the owners of those industrial necessities, the organisers of trade and the employers of labour. Opposition is at first shown between the old aristocracy of title and land, and the new plutocracy of wealth and manufactures, but again, the laws of integration, of conservation and imitation, come into operation. Assimilation and co-ordination take place. Production has become the grand social function, and those organising

it are in a position to demand citizen rights. The owners of capital and property are first of all received into the fold of the sovereign lawmaking authority.* When society has developed so far, it still contains a vast amorphous mass of proletariat unconnected with its controlling central authority, although of importance as food providers; and they are, when roused, the invincible majority.

Meanwhile, State activity touches more and more intimately the every-day life of the people, and it becomes more and more essential that the people themselves should be able to say what they think about the laws. The imperfect way in which any single individual, family or class can represent the national unity or express the national will, necessitates the creation of an organ in which all interests and classes are represented, and Representative Democracy

* In their efforts to gain an entrance into this fold they have to make it easier for the lower classes to gain an entrance also, because when the middle class agitate for the franchise they have to base their claims partly on human right, in which the wage earners share, and they have also to enliven the interest of the people as was done before 1832 in order that the aristocracy may be compelled to grant a limited franchise. This is the explanation of the advocacy of a democratic franchise by middle-class Liberals.

is established. The stage of political construction then ends.

III.

The economic period, at the end of which we stand and from the maturity of which Socialism springs into life, is marked by the organisation of production and exchange of wealth. Production and exchange are best begun in a Society of the individualistic type. The scramble of competitors and the struggle for prizes, promote the exploitation of nature and create, to begin with, the best machinery for production and the best facilities for marketing.

We therefore find that the first chapters in the economic epoch deal with the organisation of markets, the separation of the trading from the producing classes, the differentiation of capital from labour, and the setting of the producing functions over all other functions—in a word, they deal with the establishment of the bourgeoisie, the middle class, the plutocracy. As the epoch develops, frequent dislocations of industry take place, political and industrial agitations of a democratic and Socialist character disturb society, as the life of the coming epoch germinates in the bosom of the order which is maturing, and glimpses

of a better organisation are caught through the suffering of the victims. Utopias are dreamt of. But Society goes on evolving in its cumbrous way. Organic things are not created or re-created in a day. The various phases in industrial evolution, the horrors of child labour as well as the beneficent effect of a world commerce, are as much a "necessity" in the nature of things* as the process of organic evolution revealed in the ponderous books of stone from the Cambrian schists to the river gravels. To indulge in dreamy imaginings upon how much more blessed we should have been had not this movement or that been crushed out by force or starved out by ignorance, is one of the vainest and least profitable of all

*I am aware of the objections that have been made to the use of these words. But they still express better than any others the belief that every living thing develops in accordance with the law of its own being within the community of which it is a part, and that every function of society is ultimately limited in its operations by the whole social life. The living conscious individual partly obeys that law in accordance with the views of Determinists, but he is also partly obedient to his conceptions of that law operating in a higher stage of perfection, and in a changed relationship. "Man partly is, and wholly hopes to be." He can therefore move from the fixed present, and secure some of the better possibilities of the future. We might say that the warp and the woof of life are given to us, but that we can modify the pattern that is to be woven.

serious recreations. The past was "necessary"; the future is ours to make or to mar. Until the individualistic and competitive phase of our economic evolution had worked itself out, after building up an efficient mechanism of production and exchange, we were not ready to deal with the problem of distribution, or with that of use and consumption.

But the necessity of dealing with the problem of consumption—which is really the problem of endowing the individual with economic freedom, because freedom to consume is the last and most comprehensive of all economic freedoms—slowly emerges from the conditions established under the phase of productive effort. It is not only that the sense of justice is violated with increasing harshness as the contrast between the poverty-stricken and the luxurious classes becomes more marked in a nation whose aggregate income mounts up by leaps and bounds, but the very machinery of production tends to be transformed in such a way as to compel the public to guard their interests by gaining control of this machinery. Competition tends to pass away and monopoly takes its place? The common needs, sacrificed by private interest in profit-making, assert themselves more and more through Factory Laws, experi-

ments in municipalisation, Sanitary Laws and so on. In other words, the various functions in Society, acting originally independently of each other, tend to become grouped and to be subject to a will and an interest common to the whole group; and in time the groups themselves tend to become completely merged in the whole organism and to act in accordance with its will and interest.

IV.

At what point of this evolution are we now? How far has the efficient organisation of labour gone? How far has the machinery of production been transformed?

In attempting to answer those questions, we must remember that one of the chief tests of efficient organisation in industry is sub-division, accompanied by co-ordination, of labour.* In this respect we have attained a perfection which must be approaching its limits. Even in our domestic arrangements —generally the last to respond to change in social organisation—this sub-division and co-ordination have gone far. It is a long time

* Adam Smith's expression "the sub-division of labour" is inadequate as a description of what happens under the Factory System, because the co-ordination of the work of those employed in the sub-divided processes is as necessary a characteristic of the system as the sub-division itself.

since our wives and daughters spun at our own firesides wool from the backs of sheep grazing on our own meadows. These operations supplied too wide a market to remain domestic. But functions which were purely family and domestic, the materials for which were growing in our gardens, the implements for which were nothing more than a fireplace and a pot, and the performance of which was much more personal than even spinning (personal and wifely as that at one time was), have been organised apart from the duties of the housewife, until to-day our cooking is done to a large extent in bakeries, jam factories, canning and tinning establishments, and the very care of children is becoming more and more a matter in which Society is taking an interest.

But it is in the staple industries—those which supply a great market with a uniform article—that the process of differentiation and co-ordination has gone furthest. The cloth-worker used to alternate weaving and spinning with agriculture. But the resistless law of differentiation forced him to leave his fields and give himself up wholly to his machine and his frame, which had become one of many in a factory. In the factories themselves differentiation made itself felt. Separate departments were formed and the division of processes became so great that different establishments confining themselves

to different operations, like spinning and weaving in the cotton trade, were created.

The chief sociological effect of mechanical invention has been to aid this process of sub-division and co-ordination of function. Adam Smith's reference at the opening of the *Wealth of Nations*, to the sub-division of labour in pin-making owing to the employment of machinery has become classical. But since Adam Smith's day, sub-division has gone both far and fast. I may illustrate this from the boot and shoe and tailoring trades.

In 1859* men's ordinary cheap boots were made by 83 different operations done by two men; in 1895 they were made by 122 different operations performed by 113 workers, some of whom were women. In 1863, men's medium grade calf shoes, finished in style, were made by 73 operations done by one man; in 1895, by 173 operations performed by 371 workpeople. Equally striking is the change in the names by which the workpeople describe themselves. In 1863, the men were shoemakers: in 1895, the word has become little better than an abstraction, and no single workman is indicated by it. Instead of shoemakers we have vamp cutters,

* *Report of the Commissioner of Labour on Hand and Machine Labour*, Washington, 1898. The unit of production for the figures quoted is 100 pairs of shoes and 100 vicuna coats.

tip markers, second row stitchers, eyeletters, feather edgers, insole sorters, counter buffers, pullers-over, welt strippers outsole layers, heel nailers, stitch dividers, bottom stainers, shank burnishers, treers, edge polishers and such like.

The effect of mechanical appliances upon the clothing industry is equally marked. When men's ordinary vicuna coats were made by hand, 22 operations had to be performed and four men were employed upon them; in 1895 these coats were made up by 28 operations upon which 254 workers were employed. The hand workers were known as tailors, trimmers and cutters; the designation tailor has not survived the use of machinery, the trimmer barely survives, whilst the titles of fitters, basters, sewing machine operatives, button hole cutters, finishers, pressers and button sewers attest to the minute sub-division of the trade.

Every industry shows the same process. Every minute operation in the manufacture of any article becomes separated, a staff is employed to perform it alone, and the aggregate number of hands required to produce any one complete article is on the increase. The individual workman is no longer the producing unit. He does not make a thing but only part of a thing. A body of from 100 to 400 persons as in shoemaking and tailoring, is now the producing unit.

The same process has also affected the relation between trades. One trade dovetails into another, either because one supplies raw material for the other or in some other way is a complement to it. For instance, a municipality doing its own street sweeping finds it to be advantageous to make and mend its brooms; if it employs horses it finds that doing its own saddlery is economical; if its stable is large, it may employ its own veterinary surgeon and start its own forge with profit. The necessity to destroy its dust and refuse may compel it to generate its own electricity, and for like reasons it may be driven into brickmaking, the supplying of electric lighting apparatus, printing, and so on.

I have been told that a certain well-known slaughter and packing house found its bye-products so embarrassing to dispose of that it had to start the manufacture of sausages, bristles, glue, felt, candles, soap, table condiments, manure; it owns the rolling stock which it uses; in order to protect itself from competition, it has acquired railroads and has organised transport in several cities; it has opened retail shops; it insures itself, and, through a bank of its own, conducts its financial business.

The activities of the American Steel Trust afford another example of this co-ordination of industry. As a manufacturing con-

cern it includes operations like the making of tin-plates, tubes, bridges, wire and nails, which used to be separate businesses. But it has carried organisation and co-ordination much further than that. It has acquired 55,000 acres of the best coking coal lands in the Connelsville region, and has built over 18,000 coke ovens. It holds 106 iron ore mines in the Lake Superior region, and large limestone properties in Pennsylvania. It possesses 132 wells of natural gas, which yield on the aggregate 11,000,000,000 cubic feet per annum. It owns 1,200 miles of railway, and has a controlling interest in five other lines. It has a fleet of 112 ore-carrying steamers, together with docks and landing stages and the machinery necessary for handling the iron ore.*

With this sub-division and co-ordination of labour and industry, has proceeded an enormous improvement in the means of communication. Fifty years ago if one sent a message from London to Edinburgh, it took about a week to receive an answer, whilst from London to New York it took a month. The stage coach going at from seven to ten miles an hour, was the substitute for the express train going seven or eight times as fast, and the fare per passenger was not less

* British Iron Trade Association : *Report on American Industrial Conditions,* London, 1902, pp. 22, etc.

than £10 for a journey which can now be done for thirty shillings. The ship depending upon the fitful winds was all that could be used instead of the ocean steamers which now run so punctually that one can catch a certain train by them at the end of a long voyage. There was no regular cable service between the Old and the New World until 1866, and rates which are now a shilling a word were then £1. Telegrams were little used until between 1840 and 1850, and then a good machine could only send 2,000 words per hour,* whilst now twelve times as many can be sent, and devices are employed for duplicating and for working several clerks upon the same message. And now the telephone is superseding both telegraph and express train.† There is only the space of a few minutes separating the Old from the New World. The Napoleonic capitalist sits in his office and conducts his trade in every country and every clime as though his markets were but at the end of his street.

With these magical facilities under his control, the capitalist is no longer a private person operating in a little corner of his

* McCulloch's *Dictionary of Commerce,* London, 1882, Art. written 1869.

† I have heard that owing to the adoption of the telephone, one of the express trains running between New York and Chicago has been taken off.

parish, whose success or failure only ripples the calm surface of the life of his village. He deals with Society; the fate of peoples depends upon him; he rules empires; legislatures which monarchs cannot control are his puppets. Nominally, his property and his business are his own, but the consequences attending the way he controls them are spread over Society. The crash of a single financial house in Wall Street can precipitate an industrial crisis in Europe; a handful of men controlling the policy of a newspaper can spread panic, can depress stocks and cause national distress.

This elaborate organisation of industry and concentration of industrial power becomes a matter of serious and direct importance to the wage-earner when labour-saving machinery is largely used. A machine which lightens labour can very easily be turned into one which takes the place of labour, and whether that happens or not depends upon whether the machine is held by a class which employs labour for a profit, or whether it is used by labour for its own benefit. So long as there are expanding markets at home and abroad, machinery creates a demand for work, partly because the machinery itself must be made, and partly because it cheapens production and therefore increases consumption.

But its employment enormously increases the power of the capitalist over the wage-earner. After a point, it increases the proportion of unskilled labour in the community,* and enables the capitalist to call in to his aid the weak and the casual workers, generally children and women, to take the places of men and reduce their wages.† No sentiment, no tradition, no social interest can resist the imperative demand in the present economic state that the most convenient kind of labour —convenient to the capitalist—shall find its way to the factory gates. Whilst our opponents prate, for instance, about the sacredness of the family life, they allow the convenience of the machine to undermine the economic props of the family group. A pillar of Sabbatarianism can prove satisfactorily to him-

*Cf. *American Industrial Conditions*, supra, p. 317, "The tendency in the American steel industry is to reduce by every possible means the number of highly skilled men employed, and more and more to establish the general wage on the basis of common unskilled labour. . . . The American Steel manufacturer has succeeded in late years in largely reducing the relative numbers of his skilled and highly paid hands."

†A workman in an industrial town in the Midlands remarked to me the other day: "I have eleven children, but thank God, most of them are girls. They can easily get work, but the boys are difficult to place."

self that his works *must*—the economic, not the moral *must*—go seven days in the week; a man full of phrases glorifying humanity employs married women or girls to cut down the wages of men when he needs cheap labour, and turns men away from his factory gates. " Business principles "—the " business principles " of self-regarding individuals, not of Society—are made the excuse for human waste and unrighteousness, and we are willing to accept as a last word in social ethics an appeal that the rights—or the fancied rights—of property must be respected even should the heavens fall, and that the rights and duties of wage earners should be subordinated to the needs of the machinery which employs them.

Thus we see how machinery, which might lighten labour, supplants it when used in the interest of a capitalist class, or increases the demand for cheap and unorganised labour without providing facilities for a cultured leisure. Thus we see how tools, a dead factor, rule men, the living factor in production, and how a class engaging in production for profits controls the class which takes part in production in order to maintain life. Things dominate men, with results spelt out in moral, social and physical deterioration. The workman has to accommodate himself to his employer's ledger. The owner of the land and the means of production is the

owner of the lives of the people. He holds Society in the hollow of his hand.

This is no indictment of the individual capitalist, who is often trying his best to listen to ethical imperatives in his business. It is an indictment of a system of disorganised functions which cannot yield moral results. These things are done not because employers are more hypocritical or unjust than their workpeople. The employer has to perform his part in the machine. He cannot help himself. Like his men, he is a victim of the system. The Socialist complaint is not against the man, it is against the organisation which assigns to men their functions and rôle in the industrial life of the community.

Nor can any combination of labour in the form of Trade Unionism or Co-operation break down this form of economic slavery. These combinations, particularly when supported by individual character, protect the wage earners up to a point, but capital and its interests can be concentrated much more thoroughly than labour and its interests, and ultimately the contest depends upon the physical fact that the battalions of labour are numerous and have a limited reserve of supplies or none at all; and this unwieldiness of numbers and early fight with starva-

tion must always be an enormous disadvantage to the wage earners.

Hence we have reached a stage when the interest of the community in the use of some forms of property is much greater than the interest of the legal owners of that property, and when, in consequence, we must seriously question the advisability of allowing this property to be controlled by private persons for private ends.

Even if it were physically possible for a person to own the light and air of heaven, so imperatively necessary is it for human beings to use them that the right of private property in them is unthinkable. But the difference between light and air on the one hand, and land and industrial capital on the other, is only one of degree, and not one of kind.* As population multiplies, as it is deprived of free access to raw materials, as it becomes more dependent for life upon employment for wages, Society becomes increasingly interested in the uses to which land and industrial capital are put. Its right to insist upon the social use of property grows, until at last the expediency of allowing private ownership in these necessary con-

* This is seen when, as a matter of fact, private ownership of land in towns, by causing overcrowding and slum conditions, really involves a private ownership of air and light.

ditions of life is destroyed. The reasons which make the private ownership of light and air unthinkable tend to make the private ownership of land and industrial capital also unthinkable.

This inevitable growth of the necessity for Society to insist upon the proper use of land and capital is hastened in its final stages by the ceasing of competition within large economic and geographical areas, and the ruinous intensification of competition between those areas. The competitive stage is always one of unstable equilibrium. The successful competitor always tends to swallow up his rivals, and then proceeds to fight a cannibal battle-royal with those who, like himself, have done some swallowing, and have grown massive in consequence, and who have in due course to be faced by him. Or, he may come to a truce with them in a Kartel or Trust. The law of competition is that the operations of the individual capitalist become wider as capital becomes concentrated, and that at last a monopolistic peace is declared. Competition is not a final condition; it is a stage in the evolution of co-operation.

Thus, in this country there is little competition in railway rates; for years there has been little competition in the supply of paraffin oil; in the iron, milling, shipping,

tobacco, thread and other industries we have had in recent years combinations, created either after or without a competitive war, that have been more or less effective in reducing competition to a minimum. The wall-paper trust controls 98 per cent. of the trade, the Bradford Dyers, the Textile Machinery Company, the London Coal Combination, and several others, claim about 90 per cent. of the turnover in their respective industries, and the list could be extended to some length.* Even when the combinations fail, the causes, however difficult they may be to overcome, are all seen to be vanquishable. The apparent failures are but the backwash of the encroaching tide.

The fact is that the state of individualist competition, the state of serving the community by making personal profits, is nothing except the chaotic interregnum between two states of social organisation—between Feudalism, when Society was organised to maintain national life, and Socialism, when Society will be organised to maintain the industrial and moral efficiency of the community. It is inconceivable that the unregulated clash of individual interests and the haphazard expenditure of individual effort, which competition means, with all their accompany-

* For most recent information on English combinations see Macrosty's *Trust Movement in English Industry.*

ing waste of economic power and of human energy, should stand for ever as the final word which rational beings have to say upon their industrial organisation.

But whilst within certain areas the bounds of industrial peace are being widened, the growth of aggressive political nationalism has transformed an economic rivalry between trading firms into national struggles. No movement in recent years is more menacing in its probable results and more absurd in its methods than this. If it is encouraged, it will postpone for generations the success of the tendency towards international peace, and will divert and arrest the growth of that humanitarian sentiment which blots out from our minds—if not from our maps—national boundaries. Already, under the mistaken belief that trade follows the flag, we have put an enormous strain upon our imperial resources and national wealth. Commerce, which according to the Radical manufacturers, was to be the handmaiden of peace, has been enlisted upon the side of war. But no State can allow its international relations to be decided by its merchants. The interests, or supposed interests, of individual merchants must give way to the interests of the community.

The fiscal agitation has, moreover, drawn our attention to the depredations of

parasitic interests and the waste of disorganised industrial efforts. The jeremiads which have had to be uttered in order to give some appearance of evidence in support of Tariff changes, have made us conscious of the weight of the unnecessary burdens which our industry has to bear, and industrial economy has been advocated, by the Socialist and Labour organisations at any rate, as the alternative to political protection. It has been shown that our railways are sacrificing national interests for private profits, that our iron and coal industry is weighted with mining rents and royalties, that our whole social organisation is maintained for private and class gains. Every crack and subsidence which has been proved to exist in our national commerce has been shown to be mendable, not by tariffs, but by the better organisation of industry.

There is also another circumstance which we must take into account in considering how far the present organisation of Society is capable of improvement. At the present moment we are in the midst of a strong tendency in legislation to establish what is called a national minimum of social conditions—*e.g.*, wages, sanitation, leisure, etc. Now, as a matter of fact, competitive industry will not bear all this, if the minimum is to be worth striving for, and a point must

soon be reached when the far-seeing Socialist will cease to press for these superficial palliatives, and exert increased pressure for public ownership. When the legislative palliative is inconsistent with the system upon which it is to be imposed, the awakening moral consciousness which prompts the demand must see that it really condemns the existing state fundamentally, and not merely in some of its superficial and alterable features.*

V.

Labour and industry have been sub-divided and co-ordinated only in so far as has been necessary for efficient production. The subdivision and co-ordination have not been for the purpose of increasing the health of the whole social organism. Land, capital

* I hold this point to be of the greatest importance for the future success of Socialism. State interference *under commercialism* is strictly confined within limits. If we go beyond these, our experiments will be failures, and like the Paris workshops of 1848 will become bulwarks behind which reactionaries will shelter themselves. Public ownership, which after all *is* Socialism, as distinguished from State interference which is only the path to Socialism,—and not always that—must not be allowed to be pushed into the background of Socialist effort. In the interest of the larger movement, mere palliatives, like Wages' Boards and a legal minimum wage, must be rejected sometimes.

and labour; the producer and consumer; the worker and the instruments of work—are all opposing functions in Society. Hence the wealth created by this system of opposition is inadequately distributed, and the civilisation which it permits is a mixture of barbarism and Byzantinism, of philanthropy and injustice. The private ownership of land, expressing itself through monopoly values, mining rents and royalties, wayleaves, rights of enclosure and powers to withhold from use, limits enterprise and is a heavy burden upon industry. The motive of capital to look after its own interests first, subjects trade to serious periodical crises, prevents any effective attempt being made to regulate supply and demand, makes a national organisation of industry impossible and an anarchy of superfluous wealth and bankruptcy, overtime and unemployment, permanent, and it dooms the dependent wage earners to lives devoid of that security and comfort which are essential to the liberty and moral advance of man. The separateness of labour from, and its subordination to, capital breed the anti-social spirit; the conditions under which it has to do its work undermine honesty and craftsmanship; the reward it receives gives it no encouragement to attain to artistic or scientific skill and barely yields to it an opportunity to exercise the virtues of temperance and forethought.

The organs of a healthy body politic are now in existence. In their variety and co-ordination they mark an advance upon the condition of Society a century ago. They indicate a substantial improvement in the economy of effort and precision in gaining results. But each organ is serving an interest of its own. When it is serving the whole, it is in order that it may serve itself first. The next stage in our social evolution must be marked, not by the development of more special functions, but by the co-ordination of the functions which are already in existence. The welfare of the community must, in economic, political and moral effort, take the place that the interest of the classes now occupies. Empedocles taught that at the chaotic beginnings of life the various parts of the body—the eye, the head, the hand—arose and wandered separately through the world. But as time went on, a wandering eye met a wandering head, a wandering hand met a wandering arm, and at length the wonderful mechanism of the organic body was brought into being. Fanciful as this may be as a biological explanation, it is literally true as regards the organisation of the industrial world. Disconnected parts of an economic system have arisen from chaos, and only as they unite together will the economic life of Society become full.

This is the biological view of the evolution of Society towards Socialism. The evolution is accompanied by an opposition of different interests proceeding *pari passu* with a more complete organisation. But the predominant or vital fact is not that conflict, but rather the steady subordination of all functional and sectional interests to the living needs of the whole community, and the certain predominance of those functions which are carrying on what at any given time is the chief concern of Society. Each epoch has its own appropriate "historical basis" and motive, explained not by the assumption that the stages of social evolution are the creations of the desire of individuals to live or to possess, but by the evolution of the functions of Society, studied as though it were an organic process.

One conclusion from this view must be specially noticed. As each stage of enfranchisement approaches, we find that, by the influence on the individual mind of the preparedness of Society for change, by the suggestions which the signs and tendencies of the time make to critical and observing minds, intellectual and moral movements arise in harmony with the impending change, and weaken the resistance of the doomed

interests. A movement towards more effective organisation is, of necessity, preceded by more comprehensive views of social utility, and of moral right and wrong. Since, under democracy, the form of social organisation is directly dependent upon the community's need, expressed steadily as it grows and not dammed up till its resistance cannot longer be withstood, we have an increasing security against cataclysmic change, and a greater guarantee against revolution. Change becomes organic in its method. Contests between the organism and the function,—between Society and a class,—between the community and vested interests,—become gradual surrenders of the parts to the whole, to which day and date can hardly be assigned, because in the course of the change there has been no dramatic crisis.

VII.

In this growth of organisation, Society presents a special feature owing to the constant attempts made by individuals to secure for themselves certain advantages, economic and social, which can only belong to a few and which are enjoyed as a rule at the expense of Society as a whole, or of subordinate classes in Society. The opportunity which a small class has to put itself in the position of a parasite is very great owing

to the fact that in social evolution certain functions become from time to time predominant. The organ—class or group of persons—which fulfils these functions, and the individual cells—persons—composing these organs, are held consequently in distinction and acquire interests which, when a further social change has ripened, are found to be opposed to that change. Meantime, they have gathered round themselves a group of organic relationships which become but obstructive growths in the social organism, however useful they may at one time have been.* That is what we mean by "vested interests." Parasitism breeds parasitism. The predominant function, with its accessories, in every stage of social growth attempts to retard social evolution beyond the conditions which give it predominance. It seeks to establish itself as a vital part of Society which, if injured, will mean death to the whole; it

* This can be illustrated in other ways than by a study of parasitism. For instance, geologists have long been discussing why the gigantic creatures which lived during Diluvial times became extinct. The theory has now been propounded regarding the sabre-toothed tigers that lived in South America that they evolved in relation to the huge Glyptodonts of the Pampas, which were protected by massive plate armour except at the neck. The peculiar dentition of these tigers was an advantage only so long as the country swarmed with Glyptodonts, but so soon

creates a practice of morality which serves as a foundation for it; it constructs an economic system which suits its needs; it establishes by its Acts of Parliament a legal system to preserve its own lordly place; it inculcates a habit of mind in the other social functions which makes them unwilling to consider any other system of social relationship than the existing one.

The place of monarchy in the political evolution of the community may be cited in proof of this. When the time came for tribes to amalgamate into nations it was necessary to devise some means by which national unity could express itself, and this could be done only by selecting a national head. Except for such a head, nations subject to the storm and stress of invasion and internal disruptive forces, could not have survived. But just in proportion to the stress of the national need for a king, the king was able to set aside every tradition and custom which limited his tenure of office. He was able to

as the increased killing efficiency of the tigers with the sabre teeth reduced the number of the Glyptodonts, the dentition which formerly was advantageous in the struggle for existence became a handicap, because it was not fitted for general carnivorous work, and tiger and victim became extinct together. So, the classes which put property to anti-social uses are doomed to suffer in the long run with the Society upon which they prey through land monopoly, slums, unbridled competition, &c.

raise himself into a class of which he was the only member, to establish that class upon a basis of divine right, to surround it with bulwarks of dependant classes, to make its continued existence appear to be essential to the existence of the nation. To-day, long after the nations have organised themselves into unities which find expression more effectively through representative assemblies and by temporary heads, monarchy survives deprived of its legal authority but supported by the parasitism of thought and interest which it has inherited from the time when it performed a necessary function in Society.

In the economic development of Society, the same law holds good. The territorial baron holding land in trust for the community and fulfilling that trust by maintaining on that land a body of yeomen whose arms were at the disposal of the community in case of need, expressed in the most effective way possible the necessity for the community being properly defended. The circumstance that this allowed private wars on the part of the barons, and personal expeditions on the part of the king, was only incidental to the state of national organisation at the time. When, in due course, the industrial development of the country necessitated a more perfect national organisation than feudalism, the new functions of capital and commercialism found the old

ones of the land—feudalism—the vital centres of laws and privileges which had to be abolished altogether or shared with the new plutocracy. Although feudalism is no longer of any consequence to national life, the habit of mind which it engendered and the social distinctions which it necessitated, still influence us, and we tolerate the existence of a House of Lords and make barons and baronets of those who do party services, and imagine we are thus maintaining the existence of the British "aristocracy."

Hence we see that though the diseased functions atrophy, they retain a sort of parasitic life and maintain a ceremonial and social existence owing to the incapacity of the social organism to throw them off completely. Intellectual and social parasitism is one of the most formidable barriers to progress.

VIII.

The economic period has its characteristic ethical and political aspects. Whilst it was unfolding, the idea of individual liberty was becoming clearer and was pulling at the pillars of feudal society with alarming violence. Slavery was being abolished, evangelicism was crowning the meanest being with divine responsibility, and the "rights of man" were being proclaimed from the street corners by agitators, and taught

in studies by philosophers. The feeling of subordination inseparable from the organisation of feudal times was wearing off, and the separate individual, crowned with his priceless rights as a human being, was moving with an aggressive stride on to the stage to play his part.

On its moral side the epoch is best distinguished by the evangelical movement which swept aside all barriers between man and his creator, all intermediaries, all intercessors of flesh, and established, once and for all it is to be hoped, individual responsibility for voluntary sin. It made man regard himself as an independent unit in the eyes of God, directly responsible to God for thoughts, words and deeds. In reality, perhaps it only raised anew the problem of Free Will and failed to answer it, but to that answer it made an important preliminary contribution by placing the burden of moral responsibility on the shoulders of I, not on those of *we*. Individualist morals had to be established before social morals could be understood.

The shortcoming of evangelicism as a source of moral guidance was twofold. First of all, whilst attempting to place the seat of moral authority in the conscience, it, in reality, placed it in tradition and dogma which depended upon " the will to believe "

almost exclusively, and it hardly touched conduct—except self-regarding conduct—at all. As a consequence of this, evangelicism was compelled to dwell with practical exclusiveness upon the aspect of morality—so often merely formal—which deals with the relations between man and God,—other-worldliness—and neglects that which is concerned with the relations between man and man. It has failed to insist upon the application of those parts of the Gospel which impose secular duties upon the Christian, or has treated them as being metaphorical and poetic. It has therefore done little directly to create the moral demand for a change in the social organism. The method and need of personal regeneration have bounded the vision of evangelicism.

Its second shortcoming was its individualist standpoint and philosophy—necessarily so, one has to admit. Not only were individualism and evangelicism contemporary in history but they were akin to each other in principle; so much akin, in fact, that just as evangelicism failed to conceive of an organic church, so did it fail to conceive of an organic state. Evangelicism viewed the whole problem of State interference mainly from the point of view of ardent religionists opposed to a State Church and Arminianism, and misled, in consequence,

into the generalisation that the Establishment was a good example of all State institutions. It thus started from a false conception of the relationship between the State and the individual. It assumed that any increase of State activity was detrimental to individual character, and it was therefore incapable of directing the large volume of moral effort which Evangelicism itself had undoubtedly created especially amongst those in the humbler walks of life, into a pressure directed by Society to readjust social relationships so that social results might satisfy more and more the requirements of the moral individual. On the whole, Evangelicism therefore contented itself by encouraging the moral individual whom it created, to regard the State as something exterior to his moral life—as something of little or no assistance in the moral evolution of mankind.

In these later days distinctions cannot be drawn quite so clearly as I have done in the above sentences, for we are passing away from that generation. The Free Churches are beginning to deal with the social problem which is facing them. Morality is separating itself from dogmas and is endeavouring to interpret and explain itself through life and life only. The existence of a communal moral personality, a communal moral will, a com-

munal moral conscience, is being made the reason for legislation. The moral movement which characterised evangelicism is floating into the mid stream of progress to play its part as an agency in the epoch of social construction through social action upon which we are entering.

IX.

The direct contribution made to political progress during this period has been the democratic reforms of Liberalism. Liberalism is not necessarily democratic; it is really the political creed of the newly enfranchised middle class, but under our political conditions it could hardly help becoming more than that. In this country if it has not succeeded in establishing a pure democracy, it had gone far in that direction before paralysis overtook it. It had answered in practice, by passing a series of acts ending with Household Masculine Suffrage, the philosophic problem: Where does sovereignty rest?

After the struggle for political liberty has ended or has spent itself, political interest tends to become concentrated on questions regarding the function of the State, and parties begin to range themselves, on the one hand, round the atomic individualists guided by some idea of individual right and

regarding the area of State activity as territory stolen from individual liberty*, and on the other, round the organic individualists who approach political and social problems from the point of view of service and duty, and who regard the State as an active co-operator in developing and securing individual liberty. The work of Liberalism has made the position of the atomic individualists quite untenable. For the State, after a democratic suffrage has been established, is no longer an authority external to the individual; a law is no longer a decree imposed upon the people by an arbitrary will bending the common will according to its desires. The democratic State is an organisation of the people, democratic government is self-government, democratic law is an expression of the will of the people who have to obey the law—not perhaps the will

* I desire to emphasise that individualism and Socialism do not express two opposing tendencies. What is generally called individualism is only that kind of individualism which regards the State as though it were mechanically built up of atoms called persons—atomic individualism. Socialism is a theory of individualism in which the individual is regarded as being in organic relationship with his fellows in the community, and in which, consequently, the State, the community and the individual are seen to be pursuing the same ends, and are co-operating factors in the pursuit of those ends.

of every individual, but the communal will, voicing the need of all classes in their relation to the community, and may fitly be regarded, in spite of the opposition of a minority, as being "for the good of all concerned."

Consequently to speak or think, after the Liberal epoch, of State action being "grandmotherly," a limitation upon liberty, a doing for the individual something which he should do for himself, is as meaningless as to credit Liberalism with Hanoverian principles and Toryism with Jacobite sympathies.

Whilst the antagonism of interests, classes and functions still exists, or its memory still lingers, and whilst such class legislation as is passed to-day perverts the popular mind and colours its vision, some bitter experiences of democratically decreed legislation may have to be borne. An interest finding itself temporarily in a position which enables it to dictate its own terms may pass laws beneficial to itself and oppressive to the rest of the community, but just as competition in industry ever tends to exhaust itself and give way to co-operation, so, by a similar law, democracy tends to legislate for the whole social organism and not merely for one of its sections. Democratic law tends to become national law, because democracy in working tends to harmonise and co-ordinate

the social functions. A democratic government expresses the will of the social organism, and when it directs the actions of the people it speaks to them in their own voice.

This has been the chief contribution of Liberalism to the evolution of social functions and their organisation.

The economic period is therefore closing. Politically, morally, economically, its fruit has ripened and is being gathered. It has handed down to us three great problems which have arisen owing to its success in having solved its own. What is the sphere of the State? What is the relation between individual and social morality? How can national productive resources and accumulated wealth be used so that they may contribute most to the welfare of the whole community? Up to this point progress has brought us. Upon the portals of Socialism these three problems are written.

Chapter IV.

UTOPIAN AND SEMI-SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM.

Before the idea of biological evolution regulated the thought and methods of social reformers, proposals for social reconstruction took the form of creations of a new earth and new men, made by the fiat of someone whose authority was equal to the task. The man who judged social results by his ideas of right and wrong was driven to plant his ideal community, wherein dwelt righteousness, on some undiscovered island in some unknown sea; and when, in times nearer to our own, the reformer did not merely write of Utopias, but tried to make them, he bought land in the hopes of founding a society modelled on a plan devised from his own intelligence.

I.

The fundamental mistake of the Utopia builders was that they did not understand that Society develops in accordance with

laws of social life, and that it could not be rebuilt right away like a house, on plans designed by the moral consciousness and the imagination of individuals. They did not see that the reforming effectiveness of the individual will is limited by the fact that Society progresses by the readjustment of its existing organisation. They did not appreciate that man's habits, modes of action and motives are acquired from the historical period in which he lives, that they can be modified only by general social modifications and that they cannot suddenly be changed to conform to a new moral order created upon a social oasis of a thousand acres. They assumed that the social relations were casual, and that the group life offered the very slightest resistance to readjustment. They had not grasped the idea that Society at any given time has been moulded and fixed by the experiences of the social group up to that time,—that it has inherited its form from the past, and that therefore it cannot be made the plaything of men's imagination. Society can no more return to primitive bliss than man can return to the arboreal habits of his ancestors. They hoped to build anew, when all they could do was to aid in modifying structures and in changing relationships. They approached their task as though they were men considering whether a house is adapted to their

needs, whilst, by the nature of the problem, they should have approached it as men who desire to restore to health their ailing bodies. They regarded Society as though it were an architectural construction of fixed parts, not as an organism maturing by the laws of variation and growth.

Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* and Robert Owen's experiments, each in their own way, illustrate this error.

More was an apostle of the liberal thought of his time, such as it was. Guided by the humanism of the New Learning, he cast his eyes over the state of England when the evolution of national industry was destroying the peasantry. The English manor system was being transformed into private ownership of land inspired by commercial considerations. The stream from the country to the towns had started. The landlords, responding to the alluring temptations of commerce, were beginning to regard their lands not as the instrument of territorial power and responsibility, but as a source of income, and the demand for wool made them turn their tilled acres to grazing, and put sheep on the fields instead of men. Society was moving from the territorial and agricultural stage to that of world markets and commerce. Capital was concentrating

and slowly organising itself into a function separate and apart from labour, and the guild ordinances which protected the older methods of trade were passing into impotence. The unemployed were everywhere; social conflict was everywhere. Everywhere the rich seemed to be in conspiracy against the poor. In More's own words: "The "rich are ever striving to pare away some- "thing further from the daily wages of the "poor by private fraud and even by public "law, so that the wrong already existing "(for it is a wrong that those from whom "the State derives most benefit should re- "ceive the least reward) is made much "greater by means of the law of the State." The poor, in consequence, were leading "a "life so wretched that even a beast's life "seemed enviable." Everything, even Christendom itself, was powerless to avert all this wrong-doing, he moaned.

This indictment is wonderfully modern, wonderfully like the last Socialist speech one has heard, wonderfully like the present day expression of reformers who try to view honestly the facts of life.* And yet More,

*Cf. for instance this sentence of John Stuart Mill :—"If, therefore, the choice were to be made between Communism with all its chances, and the present state of society with all its sufferings and injustices; if the institution of private property neces-

the New Learning, Christendom, did little and could do little to avert or shorten the calamities. The iron law of social evolution grinds out its results with magnificent callousness.

Why? Why did More write as a modern? Why did his criticisms fall like seed by the wayside? The position of Robert Owen may as well be examined before an answer is attempted.

Owen's Utopias were products of the Industrial Revolution. He lived in a system designed exclusively for the production of wealth, devouring both the physique and the character of children, men and women. Human beings were the raw material upon which the growing industry of his time fed. Revolting from the spectacle, Owen began to condemn it on account of its moral defi-

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sarily carried with it as a consequence that the produce of labour should be apportioned as we now see it, almost in an inverse ratio to the labour—the largest portions to those who have never worked at all, the next largest to those whose work is almost nominal, and so in a descending scale, the remuneration dwindling as the work grows harder and more disagreeable, until the most fatiguing and exhausting bodily labour cannot count with certainty on being able to earn even the necessaries of life—if this or Communism were the alternative, all the difficulties great or small of Communism would be but as dust in the balance."—*Political Economy*, Book II., chap. i.

ciencies, began to address protesting appeals to the public intelligence and the public conscience. At first his schemes were aimed at modifying the structure of the social organism. He proposed to limit by law the labour of children, to provide them with a suitable education, to humanise the environment of the people and, by alluring them to walk in more pleasant ways, to draw them away from the paths of destruction they were treading. His work of that time afterwards earned for him the title of "the father of factory legislation" and "the founder of infant schools." There was, then, little Utopianism about his proposals. They were the constructive schemes of a man of penetrating thought and ripe experience who attempted to modify social environment without creating an ideal Society from the material of his own intelligence; and they remain his chief contribution to the social changes of last century.

But as time went on, Owen felt more and more the discouragement of the idealist who lives some generations before Society is in a position to listen whole-heartedly to him. Cobbett was unknown in 1800 when Owen took over New Lanark; and Cobbett had to re-inaugurate the Radical demands for political enfranchisement, and be successful before Owen's social ideas could be

pushed to the forefront of public interests. When Owen started his first community (1823), capitalism was but beginning its triumphs. The State had only just given up its attempts to fix wages, having been baffled in its benevolent intentions by the vigorous and extensive changes in industrial conditions which the new economic order was bringing about. Even in industries like the woollen, which had been controlled by capitalists for over two centuries, the employers were but moderately rich. The same was true of cotton.* The Peels were separated by but one generation from their yeoman origin. In Scotland, the first cotton mill had been erected only twenty-two years before Owen acquired New Lanark.† A subscription list opened in Liverpool in 1798 in aid of the funds required to carry on the war with France, contained only two amounts of £500 and one of £400, and these were the largest sums subscribed.‡ As late

* The cotton industry had not in the 'fifties' sufficiently developed for the notions current to-day to emerge."—Chapman, *Lancashire Cotton Industry*, p. 250.

† *Industries of Glasgow and the West of Scotland*, British Association Handbook, Glasgow, 1901, p. 141.

‡ Baines' *History of Liverpool*, pp. 503-4. In 1801, £80,000 was subscribed in three hours for building an Exchange with a Square in front (*ibid.* 506-7). Even that would not have been considered a special feat a generation afterwards, and the great fuss made about it is significant.

as 1841, according to the report of the Assistant Commissioner for Scotland, presented to the Committee appointed to enquire into the condition of the unemployed Handloom Weavers, out of 51,000 weavers south of the Firth of Clyde, not more than 3,500 were employed in factories,‡ whilst it was quite common until the middle of the nineteenth century for agriculture and weaving to be carried on by the same person.§ As late as 1834, it was stated before the Committee on Handloom Weavers that " if "a man could purchase a winding machine "and a warping mill and get credit for a "skep of yarn he can get into motion as a "master."‖ Powerlooms had not seriously menaced handlooms, and were so imperfect that their use was not clearly economical. Spinning machinery was equally imperfect. Great as had been the strides of invention, and though the " Industrial Revolution " had been well begun, the industrial organisation of the country was still but rudimentary. The factory system, characterised by specialisation and sub-division of labour, together with centralised town industry, was but beginning; the means of transport and locomotion were nothing better than the new

‡ Quoted by Chapman in *Lancashire Cotton Industry*, 1903, p. 24.

§ *Ibid*, pp. 10, 11, etc.

‖ *Ibid*, p. 25.

canal system which had been the subject of such feverish speculation in 1792, and the stage coach; international trade was insignificant. But the characteristics of the industrial epoch were apparent. The economic and political conditions of feudalism were passing away. The national existence of the country had been finally secured, and its industrial epoch decisively begun. In the first stage of that development had to be solved the problems of how to produce wealth and create markets and marketing facilities. Therefore, the form of the social organism had to respond to those needs of the social life, and all the organs and cells in Society had to be subordinated to the organisation best fitted for satisfying those social ends.

This subordination entailed suffering and misery. The towns became pestilential, children were done to death in the mills, pauperism increased, the people sent up to heaven angry protests, Utopias were built from the mental stuff of the just and the generous, Owen agitated. But protest as the organs and the cells might, Society continued to organise itself so that it could produce wealth abundantly; and all the fine ideas that were scattered abroad made no difference except in so far as they could modify the social structure within the limits of the economic function imposed upon it

by the character of the social need which had in due course arisen as an expression of the maturing social life.

Processes of readjustment and experiments in amelioration were begun early. It was found by experience, for instance, that, in spite of the opposition of the capitalists, who were chiefly fulfilling the social functions of the epoch (labour, however necessary, being functionally subordinate), certain limitations imposed by factory legislation did not retard the development of the Factory System as the most efficient method of wealth production, but in reality aided it. We must not therefore commit the error of assuming that factory legislation is in principle opposed to the spirit embodied in the Factory System. Factory legislation, so long as its effect is tested by its compatibility with the efficiency of private capitalism to produce wealth and exploit labour, is an essential part of the capitalist system. It is an essential influence upon the social organism at a time when the form of the organism is determined solely by its efficiency in producing wealth. Hence it was that Owen's proposals for the State regulation of factories were effective and fructified in Society, whilst his Utopian experiments were valuable mainly as warnings to future reformers. This was not because the legislative proposals were moral or right in the abstract, but because

Society was ripe for them; they were "natural" in the sense that they were produced by the circumstances of the time, and advantageous to the vital purpose of the generation. And, above all, they were modifications of the social structure.

This contention is strongly reinforced if we consider what at first seems to militate against it, the development of Co-operation from Owen's Utopian schemes. Co-operation in Owen's mind was as much a *tour de force* as his New Harmony. It was a new organisation of Society bringing the workers into a new relation with each other and altering fundamentally the conditions under which production and exchange were being carried on. Logically it was an excellent idea. If it were possible for the individual—the cell—to create at any time a new social organisation, Owen's scheme of integral co-operation might have worked. But the individual lives in an organism—Society,—his will expresses itself in accordance with the life of the organism, his morality is able to act effectively only in so far as it can modify the social organism and is guided by the vital activity of the organism, and his confidence is given only to systems similar to, or but an easy stage removed from, the organisation of which he is a part. Therefore, when Owen's idea of co-opera-

tion was adopted, its Utopian characteristics were gradually dropped, and, as its success became possible, the features it held in common with existing Society became more marked.

When the Rochdale pioneers began their experiment in 1844, the Utopian features of Owenite Co-operation were becoming subordinate to practical and immediate results. True, the Pioneers threw out foreshadowings of a new earth. The unemployed were to be absorbed, and an identity of interest between producer and consumer was to be established—in the long run. But the organisation of the movement was modelled on the organisation of existing Society. The rest was ornament, and that ornament has had but the slightest influence in the development of the experiment.

There was an opposition in Society between the functions of production and exchange, between the wage-earner and the person who sold him his food and clothing; and the latter was drifting more and more completely under the control of the capitalist employers. The question was: Could that tendency be stopped without hindering the efficiency of the social organism to produce wealth, without having to create an organisation different in form and idea to Society as it existed, and without imposing upon men a standard of conduct materially higher

than or different from that to which they were used? Obviously, dear and adulterated food, the credit system, an alliance between shopkeepers and employers were not only not essential, but might be harmful, to the efficient production of wealth, and the idea of the workmen being their own shopkeepers militated against no principle upon which production depended, and called for the exercise of no virtue not essential to the ordinary operations of capitalist business. So these things were alterable. But the private ownership of capital, capitalist control of the workshop and competition in production, together with the existence of the unemployed, were essential to the epoch of capitalist production, and these could not be altered.

The question upon which the success of the Rochdale experiment depended was: Was there a sufficiently strong sense of solidarity amongst the workers to secure for the stores such a determined patronage as to protect them against outside competition? As it turned out, there was. The Co-operative Store was patronised, not because it was more efficient or cheaper than the shop of the private trader, but because it was the Co-operative Store. The movement, in the main, did nothing to alter the organisation

of Society.* Some of the leaders of the movement, inspired by an antiquated conception of what they call "self-help," and masses of its ordinary members whose visions are narrowed by dividends and who regard Co-operation as being merely a venture in profitable shopkeeping, have actually turned the movement into a defence of the present industrial system, on the ground that if distribution to-day is faulty, the reason lies in the defects of human character and not in social organisation.

One ought not to blame the Co-operative movement for "falling away from the faith:" one ought not to call its shortcomings failings. The line of development which the movement took only illustrates in a very conclusive way how the chief function which an epoch is called upon to perform, postpones the successful application of moral notions of social relationships, until the circumstances arise for such a change as will allow them to be grafted upon the social stem. That the Co-operative Congress should be the last resting place of the inade-

* Society is now, however, becoming fitted for an application of principles which underlie the Co-operative movement, and so Co-operation, so far as it is intelligently aware of its own interests, is beginning to move in the direction of constructive State action, and Society is responding to the co-operative impulse.

quate theories of the economic period is exactly what one would expect. The law of parasitism described elsewhere* provides that in movements like Co-operation, the theories and assumptions held by the generation which made it a success should become embodied in the tissue of the movement, and resist change long after less well organised movements have responded to new ideas.

II.

Now we can see why Utopias of all ages are so similar in spirit and seem to reproduce practically the same human demands. They all assert the right of man to life and to human consideration against the operations of social evolution which every now and again, owing to functional changes, sacrifice the personal interests of sections and of individuals. They all demand moral results from Society. Men, thinking and writing at those times of rapid change, make claims and utter criticisms from an ideally moral point of view. Hence, at every time of social change and of activity in social speculation, men dead for centuries are described as being "modern men." They have searched for and thought they have found the state wherein man was free and had justice done

*pp. 70-74.

to him, and that has been the quest of man since morality has been.

The moral standards of the builders of Utopias are the result of the experience of well co-ordinated organisms, such as man is. But the organisation of Society has been loose and partial, its will has been weak, its functioning imperfect, its morality, therefore, rudimentary. The individual is therefore in moral possibilities far in advance of Society. But Society, slowly and by organic adaptation, has become more and more capable of expressing the moral consciousness of man, under conditions of greater freedom. So before the Co-operative movement could fulfil the complete intentions of Owen, industrial society had to pass into a further stage of organisation. Labour was not sufficiently sub-divided to create the conditions of, and necessity for, Co-operation within wide areas of production. Co-operation comes after sub-division, and in Owen's day sub-division and individualism, not Co-operation and Socialism, were the lines upon which industry had still to be carried on. But he saw both how Society was to develop and why it had so to develop.

Before this advance in social organisation could be reached, however, sociology had to pass from architectural or mechanical conceptions of social organisation to organic

ones, and so men have left behind them the standpoint from which it appeared to be possible to build a New Jerusalem by Utopian methods. Reforming effort is seen to be impotent unless it effects variations in the social structure, because it is discovered that the defect giving rise to all the miseries which set Utopists dreaming, is, that every function in Society has not been completely organised so that each co-operates with each and all with the whole. The preparation for Social Co-operation on a large scale is therefore marked by a change in the methods of the social reformer. He begins to see that his ideal city must grow out of Society and not be planted in its midst. He dreams no more of New Harmonies, but of a Golden Age.

Moral criticisms on social organisation are useful only in so far as the critics bear in mind that the organisation hitherto has been necessarily unable to respond to them, and that the chief concern of moralists should be to improve the organisation of Society so as to make every function contribute to and share in the benefits of the whole organic life. This is the aim of Socialism.

III.

An accurate view of the meaning and the method of social progress could not precede

the success of biology in explaining the meaning and method of organic evolution. But biological science is not much more than a century old, and for fully half its lifetime it has had to grope its way through tangled masses of ignorance and prejudice. Being the study of change in the organs and forms of life, biology had to remain dwarfed, whilst the miraculous views of creation, in accordance with which the world was supposed to be but in its youth, man almost as old as it, species the work of the hand of God, prevailed.

The first movement towards the final success of bold enquiry and speculation came from the geologists towards the end of the eighteenth century, and within fifty years this new science had thrown into the dusty lumber room of ancient beliefs the literal interpretation of the Biblical narrative of creation and everything it implies. The geological attack proceeded shoulder to shoulder with speculations regarding the origin of the species, and these cut even more deeply at the roots of cosmological views. Erasmus Darwin in 1794, and Lamarck in 1801, challenged the assumption that species were fixed, argued that differences of function altered organisms, and regarded these alterations as the cause of organic variation. From 1806, researches in embryology discovered the remarkable fact that in his

embryonic history man goes through stages of life which are a summary of his species evolution from the protoplasmic cell to the human being. Science was occupying every position, and when in 1858 Darwin's *Origin of Species* appeared, the revolution was complete. There were still gaps in the evidence, there was still a possibility of alternative explanations, but evolution, the dynamic of life, was carried in triumph into the company of accepted beliefs.

IV.

The philosophers, however, since philosophy was, had been exploring this same problem of evolutionary processes in its world significance. In the seventeenth century, that part of those processes which is concerned with man living in communities, began to receive special attention. In the eighteenth century, national circumstances gave these speculations a political character. A contest was raging throughout Europe between the people and their rulers. The people were asserting their rights to political freedom, and such an agitation necessarily brought into prominence the separate individual endowed with natural rights. The view of Society which gave most sympathetic countenance to these demands was that of a collection of individuals bound together by some mythical social contract. Only

from some such assumption could the advocates of political natural rights find a historical foundation for their agitation. The questions which were studied in an evolutionary frame of mind were, by political necessity, not the forms of social organisation itself, but the changes which had taken place in the political relationships between the parties to the contract, as, for instance, the growth of the kingly power, the deterioration of the status of the people in the government, the constitution of representative assemblies, the character of parliaments. Thus, social science and philosophy were, for the time being, pushed aside to await the closing of this individualistic chapter in politics, and the liberating effect of science upon thought in general.

In Germany, however, the political problems which influenced intellectual speculation upon the nature of the social unity were different from those of France and England. In the German's heart the idea of a national unity lay, and directed his thoughts to the life of communities as well as to the liberty of individuals. Thus, Herder stated (1767) that "There is the same law of change in all " mankind and in every individual nation and " tribe," and later on (1784-1791) he developed the idea that each nationality " lived " out its own spirit." Kant followed and amplified the same idea, and Fichte, smarting

as a nationalist under the heel of Napoleon, and employing his intellect to awaken Germany to a sense of national pride, proclaimed that the perfect individual life could only be found immersed in the common life. Hegel developed the idea. To him all things and all processes were but the manifestation of Spirit or Idea, which evolved itself by a peculiar method. The acorn becomes the oak through self-destruction: the animal continues to live only so long as the tissues which compose it continue to be destroyed: death is life: life is death. Hence, the universe exists by a constant change in its elements. But what is the nature of this change? Not, says Hegel, a change of growth in the things themselves, not a natural succession of one condition from another as youth insensibly matures to manhood. The change is really in the Idea, of which the changing phenomena are the manifestations.* This, which has been called one of Hegel's "most unfortunate blunders," is the error of the metaphysician, of the logician, untrained in the methods of science. It is naturally followed by a pronouncement that the issue of the more highly developed organisms from the lower is "a nebulous idea which thinking men of speculation must renounce." Hegel's philosophical conception of evolution included a defence

* *Encyclopädie*, § 249.

of fixed species, and was being shattered by science at the time it was absorbing the attention of metaphysicians.

Its interest to us is that, modified and applied to history, it was made the basis of the first grand attempt to give scientific precision to the Socialist idea by Karl Marx.

V.

Marx was born in 1818, and attended the Universities of Bonn and Berlin at a time when the chairs of philosophy were held by Hegelians, and when Hegelianism was unchallenged in its sway over German thought. He responded to the Liberal spirit of hope which the accession of Frederick William IV. to the Prussian throne in 1840 quickened in Prussia, and threw himself into politics and journalism. These pursuits required some knowledge of economics; and a study of the French economists, and of Proudhon in particular, inclined him towards Socialism. In 1844, he met Engels in Paris, and from that time onwards he was engaged in completing the fabric of his Socialist theories and in creating the organisations which were to give them practical effect.

When Marx became a Socialist, he entered a movement distracted by many leaders each

with different views, and ineffective by reason of loose organisation and indefiniteness of purpose. No strong penetrating mind had welded the dreamers into a united and aggressive organisation or blended their dreams into a comprehensive social faith.

In France, where Marx then was, several schools of Socialist thought and propaganda flourished, each bearing the name of one or other of the distinguished Frenchmen who paved the way for the modern movement.

First among these was Saint Simon, whose views, indicated in his last work *Nouveau Christianisme*, sought the establishment of a moral order of international peace and co-operative industry, and gave rise to a movement which hoped to bring about the reign of fraternity by destroying all the privileges of birth, of which inheritance of property was considered to be the chief—" the effect of which is to leave to chance the apportionment of social advantages and condemn the largest class in number to vice, ignorance and poverty "—and by bringing into " one social fund " all the instruments of production and regulating their use by a hierarchy who should apportion work according to a man's capacity and assign wealth to him according to his work.*

* Letter addressed by the Saint Simonians to the President of the Chamber of Deputies, quoted in Palgrave's *Dictionary of Political Economy*, London, 1904, iii., p. 346.

Then came Fourier, the fantastical speculator upon the wonderful cycles of our earth's evolution and the architect of the Phalanstery where men, working in groups according as desire prompted them and sharing by certain rules in the wealth produced, would be led by their circumstances to live harmonious lives.

Louis Blanc was the first of those prescientific Socialists to hold that if the basis of Socialism was moral, its method, nevertheless, should be political. He gave up the editorship of a newspaper because his proprietors objected to his opinions in favour of railway nationalisation. But he had not discovered that an idea which is not supported by an organisation of electors is politically impotent; and his belief that a member of a ministry could, all by himself, effect radical social change by persuasion or permeation, tended to misdirect the energies of his followers, and instead of building up an independent organisation they contented themselves by taking part as an unorganised party in current political conflicts. Round him centred the demand for national workshops by which alone the characteristic tenet of his creed, the right to work, could be maintained and the absorption of the means of production by the community be

effected gradually and with certainty.* Louis Blanc lost grip. He could not master the strong choppy currents of French politics of his times. He ceased to count.

But it was Proudhon who was in the ascendant when Marx sought refuge and opportunity for study in Paris; and his mutualism rested on the border line between Socialism and Anarchism.

Finally, in intimate touch with the Socialist movement proper were groups of revolutionary and reformist parties aiming at social reconstruction—from Blanquists to Comtists.

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* Perhaps no social experiment has been more misunderstood and misrepresented than the Paris National Workshops of 1848. Louis Blanc, who is supposed to be their originator, wrote of them :—"As the kind of labour in these workshops was utterly unproductive and absurd, besides being such as the greater part of them were unaccustomed to, the action of the State was simply squandering the public funds; its money, a premium upon idleness; its wages, alms in disguise." After describing the sort of workshops he wanted to establish, he proceeded : "The *National Workshops* as managed by M. Marie were nothing more than a rabble of paupers." Then he goes on to show "that these workshops were organised in hostility to me, as the official representative of Socialism." Louis Blanc, *1848 Historical Revelations*, London, 1848, chap. ix.

Here then was a floating mass of humanitarian feeling, of Utopian dreaming, of fanciful speculation and of sound economic criticism having in common a condemnation of the existing industrial system on the ground that it failed to feed, clothe and protect the producer of wealth, and also a belief that only by the organised people controlling the instruments of production could labour secure its due reward and the workman be able to command the comforts which he had earned.

But this mass of dreaming and discontent could have no great social value until it was pruned of the offshoots which were dissipating its vitality, until it was taught its own real meaning, until a definite statement of what was floating vaguely in its mind had been made, until its feelings were translated into a dogma, until its genesis was discovered. To do this was Marx's task. His Hegelian outlook presented to him a clear-cut view of the process of progress and showed him the historical place of the whole movement; and he chose words to express its meaning designed to draw together the floating elements of the Socialism of his time by giving simple and clear definitions of the Socialist purpose, and by sifting out from the movement every vestige of vagueness and Utopianism and every trace of bourgeois Socialism which would

not assimilate with the economic basis of history, surplus value and a class struggle. His success was by no means immediate, the French workmen in particular holding out for "mutualism," and carrying the first International Workingmen's Congress which met in Geneva in 1866. After that, however, Marxism dominated the working class movements of the continent.

The Communist Manifesto was the first result of Marx's activity. Issued when France was on the point of bursting out into revolution in 1848, the proletarian defeat in "the first great battle between Proletarian and Bourgeoisie,"* stifled for a time the movement of which the manifesto was the mouthpiece, but it was called upon sixteen years later to perform almost the same service as Marx originally designed for it, when the proletarian movement, divided into "the English Trades' Unions, the followers of Proudhon in France, Belgium, Italy and Spain, and the Lasalleans in Germany,"† had to be brought together and when the aspirations common to these sections had to be expressed in a set of phrases.

Marx rejected the Utopian architectural proposals of his time, and fixed his attention

* Engel's introduction to *Communist Manifesto*, London, 1888, p. 3.

† *Ibid*, p. 4.

on the evolution of Society. He turned away from the creation of Phalansteries, and sought to organise the State for industrial purposes. He also brushed aside, as being of secondary importance in social change, in his day at any rate, moral notions of right and wrong. The broad outlines of the Socialist state were laid down by him, the passing character of existing social conditions were emphasised by him, the democratic control of capital by political methods and not by mutualist co-operation was established for ever by him as the distinguishing mark of Socialist opinion. But his conception of the method of social change misled him as to how the Socialist forces were to act. Darwin had to contribute the work of his life to human knowledge before Socialism could be placed on a definitely scientific foundation.*

The influence of Darwinism upon Socialism does not depend upon whether Darwin's special theories of evolution do or do not lead to Socialism. Virchow has said they do; Haeckel has said they do not; and the controversy will not be settled until the actual evolution of the state and Society deprives it of reality. Socialism as a conception

* This subject is discussed in the first volume of this Library, *Socialism and Positive Science*, by Enrico Ferri, London, 1905.

of a desirable organisation of Society is an idea which scientific investigations have illuminated and aided, but not created. The plan upon which the reconstruction was to be made, the justification offered for it, the way to attain to it, have depended very largely upon the state of scientific knowledge, and particularly upon the nature of the science which happened to be predominant—e.g., mathematical, chemical, biological, or psychological. What Darwin, then, did, was not to lay down biological laws which, to use Virchow's expression, "lead directly to Socialism," but to present a view of biological evolution which fundamentally affected our view of social evolution, and which, in consequence, indicated to us a more commanding standpoint from which to judge our Socialist proposals, a more accurate way for carrying them into effect, and a more scientific phraseology in which to express them. Darwinism applied to sociology is as far in advance of Hegelianism as Hegelianism was in advance of Kantian individualism. Marxianism, however, is a product of German thought during the second and third decades of the nineteenth century. It reflects the method of that thought: it reveals the imperfections of that thought.* "Scientific socialism, once for

* C.f. Engels. "Readers will be surprised to stumble on the cosmogony of Kant and Laplace, on

all," wrote Engels, "is an essentially German product."

Marx rejected Hegel's Idealism, but he retained the Hegelian notion of how the Idea evolved itself. Hegel's great contribution to thought was that he once more brought us back to consider all being as in reality a becoming. The metaphysician is ever prone to lose himself in a maze of formal but unreal oppositions and contradictions. He thus creates an unreal world of problems, absolutely insoluble because they are not part of the world of experience at all. But so soon as we regard phenomena in their movements, in their evolution, in their potentialities, we are dealing with realities and not with abstractions. Hegel brought us back to those realities.

Hegel's idea of growth, however, was mistaken. It is contained in the oft-used expression "the negation of negation." A process starts by a certain condition—*e.g.*, the individualised production of primitive times; it then develops an opposite condition —*e.g.*, the communal production of to-day, organised, however, for private profit; it

Darwin and modern physics, on Hegel and Classical German philosophy in a sketch of the growth of Socialism." Introduction to *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific,* dated 1882. One is surprised to find Darwin, but not the others.

finally reaches equilibrium, and spends itself in a third condition which harmonises in itself the two opposites of the previous conditions—*e.g.*, the coming Socialist State, and individual advantage through collectivist organisation.

Marx and Engels seized upon the common radical view of the eighteenth century—the view which lay at the root of Saint Simonian politics—the class struggle, fructified it by bringing it in contact with the Hegelian dialectic and by substituting economic class motives for idealism as the moving power, and constructed, by a remarkable effort, both a philosophy of history and a political method. Change presented itself to Marx not as a process of functional adaptation, but as a result of conflicting economic interests seeking equilibrium. Hence, to this day, the metaphysical and logical faults of the Hegelian dialectic are traceable in the phrasing of the theories and dogmas, and also in the expectations of the loyal Marxian School.

The Hegelian dialectic is unfitted to describe biological and social evolution. It describes superficial appearances rather than explains deep seated causes.* It would, for instance, explain what goes on in the hedgerows in Spring as an opposition between

* This is particularly true when it is used apart from Idealism, as Marx and Engels used it.

the bud and the enveloping sheaths; it would leave out of account the great stirring up of life from deepest root to highest branch tip, of which the opposition between bud and sheath is but a small—if dramatic and easily seen—incident. For this reason, it cannot be dissociated from the idea of catastrophe and revolution, of accumulated energy bursting through opposition, of a simplicity of opposing forces which is never found in the actual world.

Marx himself, in his preface to the second edition of *Capital*,† illustrates this in the words he has chosen to express his indebtedness to Hegel. The rational Hegelian dialectic he says, "is a scandal and an abomination "to bourgeoisism and its doctrinaire profes- "sors, because it includes in its comprehen- "sion an affirmative recognition of the exist- "ing state of things, at the same time also "the recognition of the negation of that "state, of its inevitable breaking up; because "it regards every historically developed "social form as in fluid movement, and "therefore takes into account its transient "nature not less than its momentary exist- "ence; because it lets nothing impose upon "it and is in its essence critical and revolu- "tionary."

One holding modern biological views would have expressed himself differently.

† Dated "London, January 24, 1873."

Biologically, "the negation of the existing state of things," its "inevitable breaking up," "its momentary existence," is impossible. Here we find, as we find everywhere in the Marxian method, a lack of a real guarantee (although there are many verbal guarantees) that change is progress. The biological view emphasises the possibilities of existing society as the mother of future societies, and regards idea and circumstance as the pair from which the new societies are to spring. It gives not only an explanation of the existing state of things, but of its giving birth to a future state of things. It also views every form of existence in its actual process of movement and therefore on its perishing—very different from "perishable" side. It lays the very slightest emphasis on its "critical and revolutionary" side, because it is mainly constructive, and the idea of "clearing before building" is alien to its nature. Street improvements are not biological processes.

There is a very great difference between the constructive dynamic, perfecting organisation, the more coherent co-operation of the organs of society, which is the biological method, and the logical movements, the superficial oppositions, the cataclysmic changes which social progress appears to be when seen through the spectacles of the Hegelian dialectic. The phenomena which

need studying in a biological frame of mind, are the growing strength of the life-currents in Society, their deflections owing to their strength, and the modifications in functions and organisms which are necessitated in consequence. In short, the biologist as social reformer deals with social life as a whole, studies its evolutions as a whole, and in terms of the underlying whole regards the surface things which his eyes see and his ears hear—the oppositions of classes, the brooding revolutions, the perishing social tissues, the "negations" of what exists.

In one aspect the only fault one has to find with Marxian formulæ is but verbal. But words suggest ideas, and though the Marxian phrases based upon revolutionary conceptions are being more and more used with a modified meaning, their use does not lead to clear thinking. A hiatus is being established between the classical phrases and the modern methods of Socialism, and this is tending to confuse the Socialist propaganda and make abortive the practical steps taken by political parties to bring Socialism about. Owing to this, we have to submit our Parliamentary work to the criticisms of a section of the Socialist movement, which, whilst nominally offering support to Parliamentary methods, is in spirit anti-Parliamentary and revolutionary—whilst using at one minute the phrases of

evolution, turns the next for draughts of intoxicating strength to formulæ borrowed from Hegel through Marx. This confusion between thought and action, between words and deeds—this pouring of old wine into new bottles—is the gravest danger which at the present moment threatens from inside the steady advance of Socialism in this country.*

Biology alone was competent to give the clue to the proper understanding of the process of evolution, because it was the science which dealt with the modes of change followed by organisms, and biology when Hegel lived was but stuttering its wonderful tale. Biology alone deals with the processes of vital change, the growth of the unlike from the like, the appearance of new qualities and characteristics, the gradual absorption and modification of parts, the development

* The existence of this confusion is also partly owing to the fact that the propaganda of Socialism as conducted by some sections tends to become too closely associated with the spirit of bravado expressed in wild but meaningless wordiness. Describing the Socialist Presidential Convention held in Chicago in 1908, one of the official organs of the American movement, the New York *Socialist* (May 16, 1908), says—and by doing so puts its finger upon a general characteristic of the propaganda of the section to which it refers— : "There is a tendency for some delegates . . . . to favour whatever sounds most revolutionary, even if it is not exactly clear."

of new organs to fulfil new functions and respond to new circumstances. Taking on the one hand, the well-marked forms of old species, biology had to study the growth of the first from the second, and from the very nature of its subject matter it had to reject explanations which assumed revolutionary changes or special creative fiats*; and it held it to be axiomatic that whatever change it was studying issued from the total life of the organism and expressed the needs of that total life. If, for instance, it is a stomach that is being modified, the modification is owing to a change of food which nature has imposed upon the organism, or to some other readjustment of the organs and functions of the organism. But Hegel was no

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* Dr. Bastian, Professor Hugo De Vries, Mr. Bateson, and others have pointed to certain facts and experiments which appear to show that organic transformation takes place rapidly or by leaps. Recently, this view has been brought before us with particular force in De Vries's book on "*Species and Varieties: Their Origin and Mutation.*" If this view should succeed in receiving the support of investigators it can still only partly explain the origin and variation of species and is very far from affording a biological analogy to the revolutionary conceptions of strict Marxianism. It would go no further than emphasise the method of progress by the formation of independent political parties which I discuss in Chapter vi.

biologist, and Hegel, not Darwin, was intellectual father to Marx.

Therefore, the expressions "revolution" and "revolutionary," which are so frequently met with in the writings and speeches of Marxians to-day, and upon which they insist as a mark distinguishing them from mere reformers, do not only indicate, as is sometimes supposed, and as Social Democrats when hard pushed try to make us believe, that emphasis must be placed upon fundamental change so as to make it clear that Socialism is not merely a proposal for engrafting upon existing Society reformist shoots.* The words mean more than that. They indicate what Marx borrowed from Hegel. From his master in philosophy he acquired the habit of regarding social progress as moving from one epochal characteristic to its opposite over an intervening short revolutionary period. His mind dwelt on a "periodic cycle through which modern in-"dustry runs, and whose crowning point is

* Cf. Ferri's definition of revolution :—"The critical and decisive moment, more or less prolonged, of an evolution which has reached its climax." What this means exactly is not very clear, and the biological examples which might be produced to throw light upon it cannot be used as sociological analogies. The critical stages through which a butterfly evolves, for instance, are the reminiscences of a racial past summarised in each individual; but there is no analogy for that in Society.

"the universal crisis."* He never fully recognised the character of those intervening stages. To the biologist the old disappears by renewing itself, and whilst the transformation is taking place there is perhaps a rest, an apparent reaction, a sudden leap forward, but no revolutionary chaos—nothing "short and sharp." But to Marx all that was meaningless. It was a view which was reactionary. Revolution was to him a real social fact, when the old idea, crumbling by reason of its age, was being swept away by its own antithesis. Our own epoch of production, amongst others, was to pass when§ "the integument [of capitalism] is "burst asunder. The knell of capitalist priv-"ate property sounds. The expropriators "are expropriated." And again, "Commun-"ists disdain to conceal their vows and their "purposes. They openly declare that their "ends can only be attained by the forcible "destruction of all existing social order."† These sentences are typical of the deficiency of a sense of continuity‡ which one discovers in Marxian methods.

The condition of England when Marx knew it (1840-1870) supported him in his

Capital i., xxxi. London, 1896.

§*Capital* i., 789.

† *Communist Manifesto*, p. 31.

‡ Unless perhaps one bases his philosophy on Idealism, and Marx would not listen to such a thing.

error. Economic considerations as the spring of conduct were preached from the most respectable housetops, and the state of society, absorbed as it was in production and hopelessly confused when higher and more permanent ends were thrust upon it, gave ample justification for the most materialistic conception of the economic basis of history, class war and revolutionary methods. The country seemed to be flushed with incipient revolution. The "antithetical" stage of production was at its height. The truth of the Hegelian "movement" of three stages appeared to be about to show itself amidst the glow of flames and clouds of dust. Engels wrote his *Working Classes in England in 1844* as a last chapter in the history of the pre-Socialist state. "The England of 1840-"1870 has therefore become to the Social "Democrats what the land of Canaan was to "the Covenanters—the land from which all "illustrations are drawn, on which all theor-"ies of what is and what ought to be are based."*

But the England of 1844 did not break out into revolt; Chartism did not develop into Socialism. The logical conclusion was not the line of advance. The class war created trade unionism; the working classes became

* Bertrand Russell; *German Social Democracy*, London, 1896, p. 9.

citizens; law, morality, the force of combination, lifted to some extent the pall of darkness which hung over the land. The Marxian to-day still wonders why England fell from grace. England did not fall from grace. Neither Marx nor Engels saw deep enough to discover the possibilities of peaceful advance which lay hidden beneath the surface. Their analogies misled them. Their German historical evolution and predominant school of philosophy, misled them. The continent—particularly Germany—unsettled by war and by unnatural partitions, was revolutionary; England, growing slowly and naturally bound into a social unity and well organised as a community in spite of the fearful social disintegration caused by the earlier stages of capitalist production under factory conditions, was evolutionary. 1844 was the darkest hour before the dawn, not the shadow of the black cloud of the thunderstorm.

Only when we understand the mind and the historical circumstances of Marx can we understand the phrases and key words that pass as current coin amongst Marxians all the world over. His philosophy belonged to an old generation; his logical view of the state was unreal; the words which he used, together with the conceptions which they expressed so accurately, are inadequate in

relation to modern thought, and misleading for practical conduct; in short, whilst fully accepting the collectivist and Socialist conclusions of Marx, we must explain and defend them with a different conception of Society in our minds, different formulæ on our lips, and different guiding ideas for our activities.

The place which Marx occupies is on the threshold of scientific sociology, but not altogether over it.

Chapter V.

TOWARDS SOCIALISM.

What then are the forces in present-day Society which Socialists should regard as making for Socialism?

I.

The Marxian answer is that a war of classes is going on which one's eyes can see and one's ears hear. On the one hand is the exploiter, the person who accumulates surplus value; on the other, the exploited, the person who sells his labour power for a price which tends to sink to a bare subsistence level.* The opposition between these two classes grows in intensity. It will con-

* "The serf, in the period of serfdom, raised himself to membership in the commune, just as the petty bourgeois, under the yoke of feudal absolutism, managed to develop into a bourgeois. The modern labourer, on the contrary, instead of rising with the progress of industry, sinks deeper and deeper below the conditions of existence of his own class."—*Communist Manifesto,* pp. 15-16.

tinue to grow until the workers become class conscious, seize political power, and establish the Socialist state. In the words of the *Communist Manifesto*: "The proletariat "will use its political supremacy to wrest by "degrees all capital from the bourgeoisie, "to centralise all instruments of production "in the hands of the state, *i.e*, of the pro- "letariat organised as the ruling class."*

Such a view is both inaccurate as to the facts it assumes and misleading as a guide for action.

In the first place, it is not true that there are only two great economic classes in the community—the assumption which is constantly made by those who hold to the class war explanation of progress.† Marx was so anxious to separate himself from "bourgeoisie" economists that he would on no account recognise the conflicting interests of the receivers of rent and of profits.‡ Some of his followers without allowing for the admission in their systems, concede the antagonism, as for instance, where Mr. Hyndman describes the trinity of labourers, farmers, and landlords as being "as compact

* Ibid, p. 21.

† The *Communist Manifesto*, even in its day, admitted as much, but made no place for the fact in its theories.

‡ Rodbertus made the same mistake.

"a little set of antagonisms as any in our "society,"* and later on when he states that "the only results of the confiscation of com- "petitive rents or royalties by the State ". . . . . would . . . be the strengthen- "ing of the hands of the capitalist class."† This is true only on condition that there is an economic antagonism between landlords and capitalists as well as between capitalists and workmen, and that the "class war" is carried on not between two, but at least three armies, between any two of which there may be treaties of peace and offensive alliances.‡

But further, any idea which assumes that the interests of the proletariat are so simply opposed to those of the bourgeoisie as to make the proletariat feel an economic oneness is purely formal and artificial.‖ It is a

* *Economics of Socialism,* London, 1896, p. 194.

† p. 209.

‡ *E.g.*, when the landed interests joined with labour to secure factory laws, or when the capitalist interests join with labour to agitate for land nationalisation or for the nationalisation of mining rents, etc. Another antagonism of sub-divisions of economic sections is now being revealed in the case of certain producing and trading interests combining against the interests of railway shareholders and demanding railway nationalisation.

‖ The class struggle is sometimes clothed in biological garments and regarded as an embodiment of the law of the struggle for life (c.f. Ferri: *Socialism and Positive Science*, vol. I., Socialis

unification arrived at only by overlooking many differences and oppositions, which have been growing for some time rather than diminishing. The economic structure of Society is simplified out of all recognition when it is described as a contest between two economic classes, and the political problems of democracy are still more distorted under the guise of simplification when they are stated as being nothing more than an effort to give political form to this economic antagonism. The bourgeoisie is not united either for economic or political purposes, the proletariat is in the same position. For, just as in the earlier years of the Factory System, the line between workman and employer was not clearly drawn, and men could reasonably hope that, by saving and by procuring credit, they

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Library, pp. 75, 145). The struggle for life, however, is also carried on by mutual co-operation and by the organisation of the group, and as this higher form of the struggle is far better expressed by the view that what is called the class struggle is in reality the pressure within Society to reach a more economic form of organisation so as to afford protection for the individual with a less expenditure of energy than at present, the biological analogy which Professor Ferri makes, rather militates against the scientific accuracy of the class war view, because that analogy relates to the struggle as carried on in a low grade of life or regarding animals untaught by the co-operative spirit of social groups.

could become masters, to-day there is still a goodly number of workmen who cross the line and become employers or employing managers; whilst the great thrift movements, the Friendly Societies, the Building Societies, the Co-operative Societies, connect working class interests to the existing state of things. In addition, there are considerable classes of workers in the community whose immediate interests are bound up with the present distribution of wealth, and who, obedient to class interests, would range themselves on the side of the *status quo*.

Of course it may be said that all these sections, in refusing to help on the change towards Socialism, are making a mistake from the point of view of their own interests, and that if they were properly enlightened they would see that they belong to an exploited class, one and indivisible. That may be true, but a mode of action which is ineffective until men are "fully enlightened" is a chimera. Moreover, it is equally true that if the capitalist were fully enlightened, he too would embrace Socialism on account of the great blessings which it would bring to him. Thus all that the class war means, when used to indicate the opposing armies whose combat is used to usher in the reign of Socialism, is that an enlightened proletariat, not blinded by its immediate interests

but guided by its permanent ones, will be Socialist. But so also will a similarly enlightened bourgeoisie. Hence the value of the class war as an uncompromising statement of hard economic fact becomes a mere semblance. It is nothing but a grandiloquent and aggressive figure of speech.

It is an indisputable fact that the wage earner and the wage payer have interests which are antagonistic, and in the nature of things cannot be reconciled. The supposed identity of interest between capital and labour, which is assumed to be proved by the discovery that unless capital pays high wages it will not be able to command efficient labour, is no identity of interest at all. The efficient labour which high wages produce is still bought and sold by capital, is still employed or rejected as it suits the convenience of capital, is still underpaid to enable capital to accumulate high dividends, is still treated, not as something possessing rights of its own, but as something which ministers to the interests of others. This opposition may be expressed as a class war. But it is only one of the many oppositions tending to modify social organisation, and it is by no means the most active or most certain in improving that organisation.

There is, for instance, the opposition between consumer and producer. This opposi-

tion is peculiarly complex, because a man is a producer one hour and a consumer the next.* The most valid objection that can be taken to Trade Unionism (if it can be substantiated) is that it sacrifices the interests of the consumer to those of the producer. This has been illustrated in agreements between capitalists themselves and also between capital and labour. Combinations of capital to raise prices or to monopolise the market, and agreements with workpeople to share in the profits of artificially high prices on condition that they support the pool by refusing to work for any firm outside it, are examples of this rivalry between the consumer and the producer. Sometimes the rivalry takes the form of a war between capitalists, as when the German producers of pig iron damage the interests of the German steel manufacturers by dumping the rawer material in England. In other words, trade rivalry is as real as, and more forceful as an impulse of the day than, class rivalry. Sometimes capital and labour in combination fight against a class consuming certain commodi-

*Tariff as it affects the wage earning class is the best illustration of this conflict of function in the same person, and the tug-of-war between the Protectionist and the Free Trader largely consists in the efforts of the one to induce the electors to think in the frame of mind of producers, and of the other to induce them to think as consumers.

ties, as in the late bedstead combination; sometimes labour alone fights against the consumer, as in the building trades where the increased price of labour has influenced costs of building, and consequently diminished housing accomodation.* The latest illustration of the economic opposition between consumer and producer belonging to the same class has been the agitation caused in industrial districts against the Miners' Eight Hours' Bill. Here, exploited engineers, carpenters, labourers and wage earners of all kinds have risen to oppose a measure which they believe will increase the cost of coal. They have forgotten the class war and have plunged with zest into an interests' war.

The conflict of economic interest between the consumer demanding cheapness and the producer desiring to sell the use of his labour or the use of his capital at the highest rates, is an economic conflict which must not be overlooked or smoothed away in a formal generalisation. And it must be emphasised that the opposition is not one

* I desire to guard myself against misrepresentation here. Whilst I believe that the above statement is true, I impute no blame to the building trades' unions. If we have in the community a class so poor that they cannot afford to dwell in a house made under proper conditions of labour, that proves the existence of social evils which are not cured but intensified by keeping wages at a low level.

whit more unreal because the same man may belong at the same time to both the opposing classes.

Certain modern developments are tending to break up into well defined economic sections this "uniform" proletariat class. Of these the Co-operative and Building Societies are the most important. In the first of those movements, the wage earner becomes an employer—or, as it presents itself more familiarly to him, he is a receiver of dividends which, in part, are profits from other people's labour. All day, at his work in the factory or mine, he thinks of himself as the victim of the exploiter, as the loyal trade unionist, as the wage earner. But he comes home in the evening, washes himself, puts a better coat on his back, goes to his Co-operative Committee and immediately undergoes a fundamental change. Psychologically, he is a different man. He is no longer a wage earner and a trade unionist, but a capitalist employer who has been known to join in an anathema against labour combinations.

This does not mean that wealth is being better distributed, but rather that the psychological basis of class is being undermined. The boast of having control of "millions of money" which is made at every Co-operative Congress, the threat that capital and

trade will leave the Stores if this or that departure in policy is decided upon, inculcate the capitalist frame of mind in the worker, and though his sovereigns may be few, it is not the actual possession of riches which determines with what class a man associates himself. Imitation, as well as identity of economic interest, determines for practical purposes the class to which a man belongs. When a Primrose League dame shakes hands with an elector on polling day, she may or may not leave behind the shake a £5 note. But she certainly removes for the time being the psychological props upon which class feeling has been resting. Down it tumbles, and the elector goes and votes for his "class enemy." Patronage and charity have the same effect.

But the point is best illustrated by certain recent developments of co-partnership, which as an industrial theory is admirable, but as a sociological influence may be most reprehensible. The South Metropolitan Gas Company a few years ago determined to put an end to the organisation of its men, and considered expedients for doing so. It decided to try co-partnership and it succeeded. It bound its men to itself in precisely the same way as the proverbial man bound his donkey to his will by hanging a carrot in front of the animal's nose. Hoping ever to

reach the carrot, the donkey romped home, and the driver's end was cheaply accomplished.

It is interesting to work out how much financial strain the class solidarity of the proletariat will bear, and this gas company's experiment throws some light on the question. After the co-partnership scheme had been in operation for fourteen years, 4000 men were affected, and their total holdings were £170,000.* Hence, in fourteen years under the scheme a man had saved a little over £40, or about £3 per annum; and as his active working life does not average thirty years, this scheme allows the average man to save altogether something under £100. For this the men have given up their right to combine and their freedom of action, and have consented to place themselves absolutely at the disposal of the employing company. Their appreciation of their trade interests has been intensified, whilst that of their class interests has been almost obliterated, and however objectionable from a civic point of view a class bias may be, a trade bias is much worse. Nor, indeed, has this sacrifice even had the merit of being the price of a better distribution of the wealth created by this company for, whilst nominally the men

* Paper by Sir George Livesey on the scheme, in *Methods of Social Advance*. Edited by C. S. Loch. London, 1904

are receiving specially good treatment, in reality specially good profits are being made out of them.†

By the second of these organisations—Building Societies—the interests of the working classes become identified with those of the landowning classes, and are opposed to every attempt of the community to enter into possession of the unearned increments on land.

There is also another aspect to this. The interests injured by our present social state are not merely those of the wage earners. Considerable classes of people depend on the wage-earners and of these the small shopkeeper is a type. His ambitions and sympathy, however, unite him with the *petite bourgeoisie* and divorce him from his economic supporters—the working classes—and thus rebuke the theorists who see in social motive little more than economic motive. Then, there are those whose comfort and success under existing conditions are but precarious, the bankrupts, the struggling

† This is admitted by the manager, who, in the paper referred to above, stated that the bonus given to the men is first of all earned by them. "This," he says, "is proved by a comparison with the wages accounts of companies where the system is not in force, the rate of wages being the same, but the cost per ton of coal handled is considerably less."

business people, those engaged in industries which are passing under the control of trusts. All those are in economic positions which expose them to the allurement of the Socialist ideal. But they are possessed by a pathetic desire to attach themselves to the classes which rest in economic calm and bask in a blaze of social sunshine above the tempests and the shadows in which the lower beings live. From the depths to which they are driven they cast an adoring eye upon those "above" them, and from the midst of their ruin they bow the knee to whatever bears the stamp of respectability.

Class, in the sense in which the Marxians use it, is an economic abstraction, an academic generalisation.

Having discovered what are the facts, we can now turn to consider what is the idea which is in reality expressed by those who use the word class in this connection, and what is its value as a motive force making for social change. When we appeal to class interests what do we do in reality? A man's class interests cannot appear to him to be anything else than his personal interests—not his interests as a member of the wage earning class, not his interests as a citizen, not his interests as a member of the community, but his individual interests from day to day. There is no principle of social re-con-

struction in this feeling. There is the motive of a scramble, or of class defence and preservation, the motive to secure big wages, short hours and favourable conditions of work. But that is all. The tug of the class war is across not upwards. There is no constructive value in a class war.

The best expression of a class war is Trade Unionism. It is created on the assumption and experience that capital will do its utmost to exploit labour, and that labour ought to do its best to prevent capital from succeeding. The position is a simple and frank recognition of existing industrial fact. It concerns itself with no opposition except that between capital and labour, no union of interests except the interests of wage earning, no field of activity wider than the factory. It leads nowhere because it has no ideal goal; its only result can be the bondage of one side or the other. Here is the pure example of the class war. Nay, more, it is *the* class war.

The Trade Unionism, moreover, which is the purest expression of this simple antagonism between capital and labour, is what is known in this country as the Old Unionism, the Unionism which was opposed to labour politics, to Socialism, to everything except conferences with employers and strikes as a last resort. It was sceptical of any reconstruction, and decided that if such recon-

struction were to be tried, Trade Unionism, in its opinion, was far too wise to have anything to do with it. This state of mind was also characterised by a narrow conception of trade interest as opposed to general interest. It is only the emptiest flattery to tell the old Trade Union movement that its various sections ever have, or ever could have, considered anything but their own immediate interests when settling their policy from time to time. Each of the wings of an army for carrying on the class war is bound in the nature of things to fight its battles mainly for its own hand. Trade solidarity rather than proletarian solidarity is the real outcome of a class war in practice, and trade interest is ultimately individual interest. After a time—in 1899 to be precise—Trade Unionism saw that this policy could lead to nothing permanent; it widened its outlook; it rose above its old ruts; it became community conscious as well as class conscious. The Labour Party was formed, because Trade Unionism had experienced that a class war led nowhere.

Convey it in what spirit we may, an appeal to class interest is an appeal to personal interest. Socialist propaganda carried on as a class war suggests none of those ideals of moral citizenship with which Socialist literature abounds—"each for all, and all for "each," "service to the community is the sole

"right of property," and so on. It is an appeal to individualism, and results in getting men to accept Socialist formulæ without becoming Socialists. It springs from a time in the evolution of the Labour movement when the narrow creed of the old Trade Unionism was the widest revelation that nature had yet made to men striving to protect themselves against the encroachment of capitalist power. In other words, the "class war" idea belongs to the pre-Socialist and pre-scientific phase of the Labour Movement.

I am aware that the Marxian argues that this class struggle is the last in history, and that when the proletariat have been emancipated, the epochs of struggle end. The argument is but a vain assumption. The emancipation of the proletariat will of itself be the signal for new struggles of economic sections with apparently opposing interests, and so long as these oppositions are made the main reason for social change, each triumph can only lead to other battles, again and again renewed. It is not the emancipation of the numerical majority, or of a class so big as to be "no class but the "nation," which matters. What matters is the character of the motive power which effected the emancipation. If that power is the conflict of interests, it will reappear in the new regime, and if it finds no complete class

to infuriate, it will enter class sub-sections, which will then be prepared to fly at each others' throats. The assumption that by a class triumph Society is to emerge from the epoch of class conflict and sail gaily away upon the calm waters of fraternity, can be held only by those who have not ceased to believe in the magical and the irrational.

II.

The antagonisms in Society which result in organic change of a progressive nature are not merely economic. They are also intellectual and moral. Man is moved by his head as well as by his pocket, by the growth of social instinct as well as by cupidity. The richest possession of any man is an approving conscience. People who themselves have no quarrel with existing economic arrangements, must measure the achievements of existing Society by standards of right and wrong, must enter its dark corners and sojourn amongst its waste places, its wrecks and its ruins, and they will turn in horror and weariness from the spectacle and begin preparing for a new order of things. Everybody does not pile up riches on his inner lights so as to smother them. Even if we regard economics as the mainspring by which history moves, that does not prevent us from recognising that only by a combina-

tion of intellectual guidance and economic needs does historical change become one and the same thing with progress.

The scheme upon which humanity evolves to higher and more humane stages of existence is either rational or it is not. If it is not, all organised attempts to hasten reform and make it effective—Socialism included—are waste effort. If it is rational, then progress becomes a matter of intellectual conviction, and man, seeking intellectual peace as well as economic security, will have to choose which he is to pursue. Even supposing he is a wage earner and his pursuit of the means of life brings him into conflict with the existing state of Society, his success will not depend upon the richness of his experience of poverty, but upon the meaning he places upon his experience and the methods he adopts to place himself in different conditions. Economic needs may give volume and weight to the demand for change, but reason and intelligence, the maturing of the social mind, ideals of social justice grasped so firmly that they have become real existences for those who hold them, give that demand a shape, a policy, a direction. Socialism must, therefore, recognise the intellectual as well as the economic movement. And if it over-emphasises either side, let it be the former. For the pressure of economic need may exert itself

in several conceivable directions, not every one of which opens the gateway to progressive advance. A consciousness of class disabilities may be either a motive for reactionary sycophancy, or for revolutionary indignation. A man's poverty may make him a Socialist, but it is as likely to induce him to sell his birthright for a mess of pottage. The slum life may blossom into revolution, but it is as likely to deteriorate into imperialism. The rich are led away from the light by their great possessions, but the pressure of poverty also induces the poor to be content with the immediate satisfaction of appetite, and incapacitates them from patient and strenuous striving.

Not only, therefore, is it incumbent upon Socialism to recognise the existence of an intellectual motive, it must place that motive above the economic, because without it the economic struggle would be devoid of any constructive value; it would be a mere tug-of-war; it would never bring us to Socialism. The economic motive must be led by the light of reason or morality—as, indeed, it has always been when it is a factor in progress.

This line of thought appears to overlook the article in the Marxian creed that Socialism is inevitable. But the industrial and economic inevitability of Socialism is a mere

fancy. It is inevitable only if intelligence makes it so. It is inevitable only if we are to develop on rational lines; it is inevitable, not because men are exploited or because the fabric of capitalism must collapse under its own weight, but because men are rational. It is the action of reason alone which makes our evils a sure cause of progress and not the possible beginning of final deterioration. Intelligence and morality indicate the goal by which the struggle to escape the existing purgatory is guided. Human evolution is a stretching out, not a being pushed forward. Acorns produce oaks, grubs grow into beetles, tadpoles into frogs, but slums, industrial crises, poverty, trusts, do not in the same way grow into Socialism. In the struggle for life which has taken place in the world of nature since life began, many species have been exterminated, many evolutions have never been completed. Arrested development is as conspicuous in nature as finished processes.

The workmen who vote Liberal and Unionist to-day are perfectly conscious of the drawbacks of a life of wage-earning; they are also quite conscious that they belong to a separate economic and social class—and a great many of them would like to belong to another. In short, in any natural meaning of the words, they *are* class conscious. But they are not Socialists, be-

cause they are not convinced that the intellectual proposals of Socialism should receive their support.

In order, therefore, that the social organism may perfect itself, there must be the will for perfection and the definite idea as to what changes are required. The life of the organism is continued through change, and the organism itself is ever in a state of reorganisation. Nation after nation has risen and fallen, others have risen and attained to a certain civilization and there have stuck. But stagnation is impossible for our own Western peoples. They may fall; political combinations may crush them; the canker of poverty may make them degenerate. But if they are to continue to grow and to adapt themselves to new circumstances, if they are to continue to improve, it must be by the organisation of opinion and the operations of a constructive genius which sees a stage ahead and leads the people so that they attain to it. The Socialist appeal, therefore, is to all who believe in social evolution, who agree that the problem which Society has now to solve is that of the distribution of wealth, who trust in democracy, who regard the State not as antagonistic to, but as an aspect of, individuality, and who are groping onwards with the co-operative faith guiding them. That appeal may find some people in poverty, and they may follow

because it offers them economic security, but it will find others in wealth, and they will follow because it brings order where there is now chaos, organisation where there is now confusion, law where there is now anarchy, justice where there is now injustice.

Socialism marks the growth of Society, not the uprising of a class. The consciousness which it seeks to quicken is not one of economic class solidarity, but one of social unity and growth towards organic wholeness. The watchword of Socialism, therefore, is not class consciousness but community consciousness.

III.

We can now see to what combination of interests and convictions we must appeal, and how we must direct that appeal, so as to create the order of the Socialist State out of the chaos of the present day.

I reject what seems to me to be the unsatisfactory expression of a class war, because class consciousness leads nowhere, and a class struggle may or may not be intelligent. A " class war " describes only a part of the condition which Society presents to our eyes to-day. But still, we turn our hopes first of all to the wage earners. They are the most certainly doomed victims of the present chaos; they suffer most from the

inability of the present system to provide employment, wages, life; they are least buoyed up by elusive hopes that a lucky turn of the wheel of fortune may pitch them up on the backs of others; they are the helpless spills tossing on the troubled waters of present day strife; their attempts to share in the benefits of an efficient method of production result in little but turmoil, hunger and poverty; and above all, their needs have now become the chief concern of Society, because in fulness of time social organisation is being tested by its human results, and because the economic enfranchisement of the people naturally treads upon the heels of their political emancipation.

And it is of special note for the moment that they have been subject recently to rebuffs and attacks in the Press, the Courts of Law and Parliament, and thus have been taught the necessity of political unity and independent organisation. They have given us the Labour Party in consequence. The politics of an enlightened democracy is of necessity social, and is aimed at ending experiences of unemployment, old age pauperism, and so on. Hence, as one of the laws of evolution is, that need creates organs, redistributes and organises functions and changes biological types, working class policy must be directed towards the organisation and the development of the organs and

functions of mutual aid in Society. The political policy of the Labour Party might well be described as an attempt to give mutual aid shape and form in our national life. So soon as a serious attempt has been made to frame a policy directed to such ends, it will be found that monopoly in land and the use of industrial capital for individual profit are the sources of the experiences which Society now seeks to shun, and they must consequently be supplanted by public ownership and production for use, before labour can enter into enjoyment of the blessings which an efficient method of wealth production would make possible. Labour has but one intelligent road of advance—that of economic and industrial reconstruction—that of Socialism.

Among the wage earners, therefore, we must expect to find in fullest development, and in forms most political and effective for organic change, those vital and vitalising disturbances which indicate active life pushing out to higher forms of organisation. But those disturbances, as has been shown, are not purely economic, and are not therefore confined to wage earners, and consequently in order to gather together the forces making for Socialism, the basis of the movement must be such that everyone sharing in the disturbed promptings must be included.

All barrier phrases and sectional dogmas must be removed from Socialism. The ex-

periments in factory legislation, in public health regulations, in education, in municipalisation, are pointing out to men of all classes the desirability of going yet further along the road which leads to Socialism, and are forming in the minds of men of all classes a conception of Society, of the community and the individual, formed on Socialist principles. When we think systematically of the scattered fragments of reform promised by the political parties, we see that they are but the foreshadowing of Socialism; when the tendencies begun by scores of experiments —factory laws, public health laws, municipalisation—are followed out, joined together, systematised, Socialism is the result. This completeness of organisation, this idea of national and communal growth, this state of business efficiency, nothing short of it and nothing which is sectional in it, should be laid down as the basis of Socialism. And the political movement which is to express, and ultimately satisfy, this need for the organic unity of Society, must be a movement of the whole of Society and not of one of its sections—the working classes. As the brain moves obedient to the grossest as well as the purest prompting of the needs of the living thing, so must the political organ in Society be subject to the purest prompting of moral intelligence as well as the grosser prompting of economic need; but both must

be united if a more perfect form of Society is to be created.

Economic hardships are the flints on the road, but these flints may develop on us the hoofs of the beast, or may compel us to use our intelligence to find smoother paths. Socialism is the latter alternative.

Chapter VI.

POLITICAL PARTIES AND SOCIALIST THOUGHT.

Socialism has sometimes been defined in such broad terms as to include philanthropic endeavour and moral effort which rests upon individual will. Such a definition is inaccurate. The community, acting through law, and organised into definite forms determining the lines of individual action, is an essential part of the Socialist idea. The Socialist considers that the State is as essential to individual life as is the atmosphere, and he regards the evolution of political democracy as having been necessary in order to create a State which could respond to the common will. The modern State in most civilised countries is democratic, and, in spite of the remaining anomalies and imperfections, if the masses of the ordinary people are agreed upon any policy, neither rich electors, privileged peers, nor reigning houses could stand in their way. That being the case, the Socialist sees that so soon as the problem: In whom does the sovereignty rest?—the

problem underlying political democracy—has been solved, progress presents to the community, as a sequel, the further conundrum: What is the sphere of the State?—the problem underlying industrial democracy—the problem which creates the Socialist conception of Society.

I.

This involves a positive view of the State.* The Socialist refuses to regard the State as a mere atomic collection of individuals, the majority of whom coerce the minority. He regards it as the means of expressing a will which belongs to the minority as well as to the majority, because the minority is organically connected with the community for which the State is acting; he, therefore, does not consider legislative and administrative work to be a coercive limitation of individual liberty, because he cannot think of a community as only a crowd of individuals, each self-centred, each pursuing his own ends,

* It is true that a positive view of the State has been taken in much of our recent legislation, as, for instance, in Factory Acts, and in everything known as socialistic legislation, but it has been haphazard and unsystematic, and has been applied without understanding. State interference has often been resorted to as a quack remedy. Socialism comes with a clear and scientific idea of the aim and method of State activity, and can, therefore, discriminate between mistaken and proper methods of State action.

each endowed with natural and inviolable rights. The communal life is as real to him as the life of an organism built up of many living cells. When, therefore, he is told that self-help and State activity are opposed to each other, that individual liberty and a thick statute book are inconsistent, that the action of the electors through parliament or municipalities is different in kind to the action they take through Trade Unions, Co-operative Societies, Limited Liability Companies, or that communal property is a limitation of private property, the Socialist confesses he does not follow the argument. There is no opposition between these things. Not only do they exist, in fact, side by side—they are naturally co-existent and interdependent. They indicate that the law of individual well-being is a law of social personality, and that mutual aid as well as individual struggle is an element in the process of progress. The State is, therefore, essential to Socalism and we must consider Socialism as an influence in politics, and in relation to political parties.

II.

The history of State activity and political parties has been different in this country from what it has been on the continent. In modern times we have not had to fight wars of self-defence like Germany or France; we

have not had revolutions and revolutionary changes uprooting the present from the past; Napoleon did not walk over us; we have not had, like France, political minorities, whose avowed object has been to overturn the established political order; militarism has not exercised its fatal influence by separating the State from the people; since the days of George IV. our Parliament has been free to legislate as it has wished. We have, therefore, had few crises. Progress has been steady, if slow; the dams obstructing its course have given way to slight pressure, and no floods of pent-up evil have had to break down barriers and rush furiously down courses where they might otherwise have meandered peacefully. On the continent it has been different. There, the modern period was ushered in by Revolution. Wars followed, natural boundaries were destroyed and a new crop of kings reared. When peace came, Europe did not begin where she had left off before the French Revolution exploded in her midst. She was partitioned to suit Austria and Metternich; volcanic forces were implanted in Italy, Norway, Germany, Prussia, Belgium, Holland, and they began their protesting thunderings almost at once. Europe for well nigh a century was ruled by political Utopists, by gentlemen of individualist beliefs, who thought that the individual will

was invincible, and that States and peoples were but blocks of wood to be cut into whatever forms the fancy and pride of a few rulers decided. The result was revolution, sudden change, catastrophic politics.

This difference in political history between ourselves and our neighbours has had a determining influence upon the work and nature of political parties here and in Europe. The difference is temporary, but it is important. Continental conditions have encouraged theories and dogmas regarding the course of progress, and have created parties to embody these theories and dogmas. Thus, we have rigidity in party relationship, and a lingering survival of the revolutionary method.

Here, our revolutionary period ended with 1832, and before that its revolutionary characteristics were very mild. As on the Continent, that period of our politics was characterised by political dogmas and systems of progress built up upon assumptions of class wars, economic motives, and other simple explanations of complicated problems.* But, since 1832, parties have been in touch with life and national need, and, in a biological

* For instance, philosophic Radicalism sprang from our revolutionary period, and hardly survived the generation which followed 1832.

frame of mind, have been busying themselves with results, rather than in a logical frame of mind declining to budge one degree from some imagined meridian of sound political theory. Speculative politics have been proceeding *pari passu* with experimental politics.

Parties do not therefore in this country survive after their theories have become useless for practical purposes. The weird mummies of a byegone generation, which form the Liberal parties in most Continental countries, are unknown here except as individuals camping outside the bounds of the regular parties. An influential minority can for a time thwart the will of the majority, but when the supreme test comes, a party finds its strength to lie not in its rich minorities, nor in its select supporters whose interests do not coincide with those of its rank and file, but with the rank and file itself, and it is the experience of the rank and file which ultimately directs party politics.

Our political method no doubt cripples intellectual movements in politics, but it lays massive foundations by patient experiment. It finds its chief motive for action not in the flaws of a system which one can detect by logical processes, but in evils actually experienced. It compels the assimilation of all useless political organs, and does not allow

the atrophied remnants of old parties to encumber the State by retaining a separate existence. It makes it impossible for parties to flourish on words, and forces them to apply themselves to satisfy the needs experienced by the communities where they rule. But as the experimental method ever requires the guidance of theory, all scientific progress being a combination of induction and deduction, the British political method demands for its success a clear comprehension of the social and individual ends which it from time to time embodies in its work, so that it is by no means a "living from hand to mouth." The British method is not opportunism, but the experimental method in the full scientific meaning of the term.

This may be illustrated in two ways. When, as the result of the Labour and Socialist political victories in 1906 and 1907, the Unionists started a campaign against Socialism, and the Liberals proceeded to draw lines of distinction between themselves and the Socialists, both these parties agreed that the difference was to be found in the fact that their programmes dealt only with a Social Reform which retained individual initiative and enterprise as the basis of social organisation.* The Socialist speedily pointed

* The most definite attempt to draw this line was made by Mr. Balfour in Birmingham (14 Nov., 1907),

out that all attempts to draw this distinction failed and were bound to fail, because, when one tries to base social reform on individual responsibility it is at once apparent that it cannot be done. The very fact that Social Reform is to be imposed on the individual by the power of the State destroys such a basis. When the State compels private property to bear the burden of unemployment and old age pensions, it *de facto* claims a right to dispose of possessions which upon the anti-Socialist hypothesis belong to another. Moreover, as there will be private property under Socialism, the distinction that Social Reform is "based on private property" is a false one. The real distinction is contained in one's conception as to what private property should include. It included "niggers" a generation or so ago. Is not its scope to be further circumscribed as time goes on and the organisation of the State becomes more definitely directed towards procuring and defending individual wellbeing? The very programme of Social Reform created to be a bulwark against Socialism, itself limits that scope; and that this is so is understood at once

when he said: "Social reform is when the State, based upon private property, recognising that the best productive result can only be obtained by respecting private property and encouraging private enterprise, asks them to contribute towards great national, social and public objects. That is social reform."

when one knows that it is in the main taken from what the Socialists for the last twenty years or more have been asking for as first steps towards Socialism.

The same idea can be illustrated from another point of view,—that of Socialist method. One can conceive of a Social Reform which would break down existing Society, bring a crisis and stop the existing mechanism. This is what some critics of Socialism imagine that Socialists are going to do, and they are enabled to harbour such a belief by storing their minds with detached statements loosely made by a few Socialists. Moreover, Marxism gives some countenance to this notion. Catastrophic Socialism, however, belongs as much to the days that are past as does Utopian Socialism. In so far, for instance, as some people advocate a legal minimum wage because they know that Society as at present constituted cannot pay such a thing—not because there is not enough wealth, for there is, but because our mechanism of distribution will not allow the thing to be done—and they hope that in this way a breakdown will be reached and that after the breakdown will come Socialism, they are following unscientific and profitless paths. The only safe prophecy to make regarding such circumstances is, that after the breakdown will come reaction. The Social Reform that is to bring us to Socialism is

that which takes the opportunities of the present and with them embarks upon collectivist experiments and makes beginnings in collectivist organisation. Capitalism is to grow into Socialism by having its advantages—*i.e.*, sub-division of labour, co-ordination of capital, &c.—retained for Collectivist purposes and organised by a Collectivist State. Socialist Social Reform is therefore directed not to destruction but to fulfilment. It aids Capitalism to grow into Collectivism; it does not knock Capitalism on the head. All that this means is, that the Socialist is an evolutionist and is beginning to understand the political methods which that imposes upon him.

Thus, when the opponents of Socialism invite the country to adopt Old Age Pensions, Unemployed Acts, Municipal Housing Schemes, and similar programmes of Social Reform in order to stem the Socialist tide, surely the Socialist can look on with much complacency and behold the fulfilment of his purposes as the result of his opponents' efforts.

III.

The immediate origin of the present Socialist movement was the Industrial Revolution. It was the vague dreams of a Socialist order which men lingered over

when they beheld the young dragged to the factories before their tiny legs could well carry them there, adults exploited of life and possession by the unchecked greed of capital, the ugly town raised up haunted by vice and inhabited by disease, poverty become chronic, "economic law" proclaiming the end of human sentiment in business operations, men beaten and bruised and torn under the harrow of commercialism and left without consolation and without hope.

The first germinating growths of the practical Socialist spirit were to be found in projects for land nationalisation promulgated by men like Thomas Spence and Professor Ogilvie. The Spencean Philanthropists, who were a thorn in the side of the purely political Radicals, "openly meddled with sundry "grave questions besides that of a commun-"ity in land, and amongst other notable pro-"jects petitioned Parliament to do away "with machinery."* Dr. Ogilvie was an Aberdeen Professor, who turned his attention to the depopulation of the country, and wrote *An Essay on the Right of Property in Land*, in which he advocated the taxation of land values and the establishment of a Land Court.

In the direct line of succession to these two came Robert Owen, who widened the

* Harriet Martineau's *History of the Peace*. Bohn's Edition, i., p. 81.

outlook and the interests of social reformers by laying down theories of the relation between education, character and environment. With him, English experimental Socialism may be said to begin. He started the epoch of social legislation which has given us our Factory Laws, and which, mainly through those laws, has made us familiar with the idea that it is the business of the State to protect the weak and create conditions favourable to the full development of men and women. As a result of Owen's work, the tendency towards Socialism in this country made itself manifest in certain directions, but particularly in politics through the growth of State activities and the political organisation of the working classes; in ethics through the assumption, which ever since has had such definite practical effect, that man and his circumstances cannot be separated in any programme of reform; in business, through the growth of the Co-operative movement, first in distribution and latterly in production.

The beginnings of a political labour movement, for which Owen was responsible, soon grew into Chartism under the nurturing care of evil social conditions and a lack of social sympathy in both political parties. It is marvellous that this movement did so little either by contributing ideas to succeeding generations or by direct influence upon legis-

lation. Two explanations can be offered for this. In the first place the country was not quite ready even for political Chartism, and was far from ready for the social implications of Chartism. In the second place, although the people were prepared to be led, Chartism produced no genuine leaders. Under the political circumstances of the time, the voice of the masses of the people could penetrate Parliament only through secondary channels, and the most permanent effect of Chartism was to give an impetus to the individualist and voluntary movements of Co-operation and Trade Unionism.

Labour then ceased to organise itself for political purposes. The demand for labour which followed the inauguration of free trade, the development of railways and rapid transport, and the consequent opening up of the world's markets, allayed social agitation and gave the Radical wing of the Liberal Party an opportunity of inspiring the imagination of the working classes with visions of the blessings which would follow upon political reform and the curtailment of aristocratic privileges. Thus, the social problem as a direct political issue receded for the time. Enthusiasm for political democracy grew more ardent. A self-confident, impatient, spirited mass gathered to storm the last citadels of the politically privileged classes. Labour sentiment had been diverted

into purely political channels. All parties accepted the situation: the people were to rule. It might be the people drunk or the people sober, the people rational, or the people cajoled. But still it was to be the people.

This condition reinforced the national characteristic of trusting to experience rather than to theory. A sudden outburst of democratic ideas, owing mainly to Continental influence, appeared in the fourth decade of last century, and have been dying gradually away ever since, because life is more or less tolerable under a monarchy, a House of Lords, and an Established Church. The attacking army has become dispirited, or content with things as they are. "The "enemy" is not so bad after all. The spirit of the Labour Radicalism of the seventies has gone out of us.

But in the meantime legislation has become more and more intimately connected with life, administration with public needs, and the State with the individual. In this process, parties have changed and have accepted the inevitable.* Nothing is more

* After the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832, Peel said during the debate on the Address that he would accept the Reform Act as "finally and irrevocably settling the question of reform." His speech was tantamount to a declaration that the party which he led would change its spirit, and accommodate itself to the new conditions. The his-

difficult for the foreigner investigating our political conditions than to master this most elementary characteristic of British politics. He thinks of party as the embodiment of a political dogma, and finds ours to be the temporary exponent of a method. He looks for something fixed and rigid, and finds something constantly in a state of flux and flow. He expects to find something founded on the rock of first principles, and discovers a barque floating upon currents and moving with the stream.

IV.

This characteristic of British political life is of the greatest importance to the Socialist movement. It necessitates a special phraseology and a special political method. It means that in this country Socialism cannot create for itself a political party founded on its dogmas—that Socialism should see that its aim is to become the spirit of a party which may not profess the Socialist creed as church folk profess that of Athanasius, but which will take the Socialist outlook and use Socialist constructive ideas as guides in practical legislation. This explains why Socialism is traceable in every kind of progressive activity, and why it is slowly and

tory of the Tory party since that time shows how well Peel understood the life of British political parties.

organically changing the structure of society, just as new modes of thought change the whole of a man's outlook on life, or as a change in diet modifies the digestive organs and the bodily structure.

In spite of this, and in a way because of it, the life of a party is finite. A party applies certain general principles in certain directions and to certain conditions, and then it is gradually faced by conditions very dissimilar to those which originated it, and which gave rise to its working principles. Then, whilst it struggles valiantly to adapt itself to the new conditions, it decays through a period which is a transition or reactionary period, just as the sabre-toothed tigers of South America died out when the race of Armadilloes approached extinction.

There is some reason for regarding the present time as one of these periods. Capitalism has worked itself out; atomic individualism has become barren; our conceptions of property are being revised; all the old axioms regarding the State and the individual are being swept away into reliquary chambers; the centre of gravity in social economics is shifting from problems and methods of production, to problems and methods of distribution. In the political arena the old champions of political freedom, having fought their fight with their own appropriate weapons, have now nothing to

face like what they were accustomed to fight, and are riding off the lists, whilst their places are being taken by a new generation, armed differently and animated by new crusading ideals.

Finally, a very definite and pressing need has arisen for the development of moral and social wealth, which can bring no dividends to capital, and therefore is neglected by capitalism. The character and quality of citizenship can be nurtured and encouraged by a policy of legislation and administration, but there is no private profit in it. The clearance of slum property, the maintenance of parks, the establishment of havens of rest for the aged, the general improvement of the texture of human material by education, are communal questions. The deterioration of the physique of our people is of but remote interest to the factory owner or the house agent, and by them can be neglected, on the ground that it will not materially affect profits and rents—this generation at any rate. Indeed, profits and rents can really be made out of the very conditions which hasten this deterioration. But, from the standpoint of the community, every depopulated parish, every overcrowded area, every class of under-fed children, is dead loss.

To meet those problems does not always necessitate a new departure in policy. It very

often means no more than that services, only part of which can pay dividends, and which are divided into paying and non-paying businesses, should be co-ordinated. At present, the paying parts are nursed, and the non-paying neglected. But from the point of view of the community, both should be developed. Thus, experience teaches that the full social need can never be supplied by self-interested capitalism. There are certain public needs which, though different and separable in the eyes of private enterprise, are inseparable from the point of view of public policy. Private enterprise, for instance, separates a housing from a transport policy. One interest builds houses, another constructs trams, and the activities of both are limited by rents and takings. But, from the point of view of the community, houses and trams, overcrowding and transport, are inseparable, and a policy regarding them is neither justified nor condemned by financial gain or loss. It would " pay " a community to run " free " trams as it now provides " free " roads. Further, in considering its policy of building up its structure, of gaining for itself healthy life in order to supply vigour to all its parts, of increasing its efficiency as the condition of individual efficiency, a community has always to consider whether certain public needs—*e.g.*, locomotion—have become so " primary "

as to be part of a common charge—*e.g.*, schools or roads—and, therefore, to be paid for from rates on the principle that the common needs of a community should be borne by the property of the community or by those who are deriving most benefit from the community; or whether they are still, in the main, personal luxuries and advantages, and, therefore, to be paid for out of the pockets of the user at certain rates per unit of use. The history of civic progress is the history of how the personal becomes the common; of how, for example, the luxury of a bath becomes the common necessity of a bath. Individual use becomes social use. "I will accept nothing which "all cannot have their counterpart of on the "same terms," wrote Whitman. That is not the words of the visionary poet, it is the message of history.

This new conception of social structure and public policy could not be adapted to the political organisations which came into being to carry on the work of last century. Change in Society is continuous, but new generations, organically connected with the old but not the old themselves, are required to carry on the change. If a generation spanned the space of a century and not of only a third of a century, change would be slower, because new organisations

and new conceptions of epochal change would be more difficult to create, as Society would not keep so young as it does. Consequently, when in politics a new outlook and objective are presented with comparative suddenness, a new political organisation is required.

Ever since 1868, when the workmen in the boroughs were enfranchised, the growth of a new political organ has been apparent. This Reform Bill led at once to a conflict between organised labour and both political parties. After its lapse into a purely political grove, the labour movement again developed upon its own special lines. Trade Unionism demanded certain alterations in the law of conspiracy, of master and servant, of combination; the conditions of factory labour were such that no satisfactory improvement could be made save by further Acts of Parliament; a mass of questions in social economics grouped round the ownership of land, wages, unemployment, hours of labour, were occupying the attention of the working classes, and the politicians were not prepared to face them. Moreover, in industrial warfare employers forgot political differences and joined in opposing labour's demands. Thus the necessity for a new political departure was made clear

Nor were the new forces being gathered

merely to the tune of the political incompetence of the old. Moral and intellectual tendencies and ideas that had been moving in Society for a generation and more, mingled with the revolt which was creating the new movement. Carlyle and Ruskin had troubled conscience and intellect; the Christian Socialists had struggled with the practical problems of association and organisation; the craftsmen of later times, like Morris, laid down the only conditions under which honest work could be done, and whilst thundering against the shoddiness of the present system, infused a warm idealism into the new movement by writing and speaking of it in its artistic and craftsman aspects. Even Spencer's opposition, being based upon such a palpable failure to apply his philosophical system to Society, ripened into Socialist fruit, and Mill's later confessions contributed to the same end. Here, if anywhere, were the germs of a new political birth, too distinct and too powerful to be merely a fresh stimulus to an old and jaded political organisation.

To begin with, they were perhaps but vague gropings rather than clearly defined visions, and their first result was a flood of estimable but uncontrolled effort and desire such as that which Marx found in Paris in 1847. From this flood arose the definite, at first tiny, but swift and

straight running current of Socialism which organised itself in 1884 through the Social Democratic Federation, and in 1893, to very much better purpose, through the Independent Labour Party. In 1900, the Socialist and Labour movements combined, and the Labour Representation Committee, now the Labour Party, was the result. Thus by the biological process of a union between thought and experience, the study and the bench, the movement for a complete reconstruction and the demand for an immediate readjustment, a real political organism has been brought into life which is capable of embodying all the tendencies, gropings, experiences, thoughts, idealisms, which together are urging society forward to greater perfection.

V.

If we review our present political position from the standpoint of this chapter, we discover in it a new meaning. For twenty years, before the election of 1906, when Liberalism swept the country, Liberal politicians had been telling us that we were in the trough of reaction. In one sense that was true, but the idea of reaction did not include all that had been happening.

The enfranchised people have disappointed their backers. Interests that were supposed to be doomed thirty years ago not only con-

tinue to exist, but have gathered strength. The King, the House of Lords, the military caste, have not only survived democracy, but have found in its weakness a new source of power, and in its interests a new bulwark of defence.

This is not surprising. Metamorphosis exhausts the organism. The caterpillar, at the end of its caterpillar days, retires, and in a comatose and helpless condition passes through its transition stage. Every critical change in an organism is attended by a suspension of vital energy and a seeming ebb of life.

Such is the condition of our society at the present time. The Liberal stage is past: the stage of Socialism has not yet fully come.

Liberalism stood, in the political sphere, for enfranchisement, for freedom, for democracy. Its battles have not been won fully. The register of electors is still limited; the democracy are not enfranchised; not a single woman can say directly what the law should or should not be. And, towering above the whole democratic fabric which has been erected since 1832, the House of Lords still raises its privileged head, the negation of popular sovereignty, the custodian of narrow class interests, the safeguard of everything anti-social and parasitical.

But the flame of political democracy has

died away. The demand for political power, except perhaps in the special case of women, will, for its own sake, stir up to no more crusades. The finishing touches will not be put upon political democracy until the existing constitution is proved to be a barrier to social legislation. So much for the political side of Liberalism.

On its religious side, Liberalism stood for the liberation of spiritual organisations from the binding patronage of the State and for equality of all sects in the eyes of the law. The latter for most practical purposes has been secured, and the attempt to go back upon it made by certain provisions of the Education Act of 1902, blew the dying flame of religious Liberalism into a blaze which materially contributed to the change in Liberal prospects which made itself evident in 1906. But in this department of Liberal activity, nothing remains to be done except to disestablish the church. In this, however, there is no great interest. The Liberationist argument has to be re-stated because the negative conception of the state upon which it once rested is no longer held. But in the re-statement of the argument, the Nonconformist must be willing to commit himself to doctrines of freedom of thought which involve what he erroneously calls "the secularisation of the State," and that he will not

do. He was tested during the debates on the Education Bill of 1906 and he failed. He was asked to apply his Liberationist principles to the school, but he shrank from the ordeal. Although he has declared against the endowment by the State of the Bible in the Church, he clings to the State endowment of the Bible in the primary schools. So, except under special conditions such as those created by the Education Bill of 1902, the religio-political principles of Liberalism have ceased to inspire enthusiasm and to provide a battle cry.

In the matter of national finance, the retrograde proposals of the Tariff Reform League and the stupid extravagance and maladministration of the Tory Government between 1895 and 1906, raised into a temporarily renewed value the classical economic doctrines of Liberalism. But these doctrines, whilst making excellent fortified camps for defensive purposes, are of no use to an army on the march. Free Trade solves no social problems. It may make poverty less oppressive, unemployment less severe, cost of living cheaper, labour combination easier, monopolist combination more difficult, and so on. But none of these advantages amounts to the solution of problems. Economy is good, but not so good as profitable expenditure; waste must be stopped, but with the desire

to stop it, must not go an idea that all State expenditure is wasteful. A campaign to encourage suspicion against national expenditure is a necessary and a good thing as a corrective to maladministration in our spending departments, but as a positive policy it is futile. This has been shown already in the history of Liberal finance since 1906. In spite of Liberal principles of economy, expenditure has not been curtailed, the impetus towards militarism could not be stopped; the demand for further expenditure such as Old Age Pensions could not be denied.

From the point of view of social organisation, the function of Liberalism has been mainly negative. Liberalism has cleared the ground of ancient, tottering forms of property. It broke the feudal relationships which during the nation-making and political epoch, knit the various classes in an organic whole, and in its attempts to solve the problem of wealth production it glorified the rights of the separate individual and sub-divided the functions of labour down to the finest possible difference; but it made little attempt to co-ordinate these individual rights and sub-divided functions, except in so far as it was necessary for them to co-operate for the production of wealth. At certain points like education, factory conditions, public health, the pressure demand-

ing public interference was so great that Liberalism had to find a place within itself for constructive ideas, which, when matured into full luxuriance in the next epoch, were to mark off that epoch in opposition to that of Liberalism. But the distinctive mark of the Liberal epoch was the disruption of social organic relationships, and the emphasising of atomic individualism as the controlling power in industry, religion and politics. Now, since atomic individualism, in face of the problems which this century is called upon to solve and of the knowledge which it has inherited, is seen to be false and of no practical value, Liberalism is compelled to apply the authority of the State for constructive purposes in a haphazard way, and in relation to separate grievances as they come up. The attempt is doomed. It only unites in opposition all the threatened interests, because the Liberal attack seems to be specially against them, and not to be the manifestation of deep national impulses of growth. Here again we see evidence of the close of an epoch.

Finally, as regards a generous belief in the principle of nationality—to which the history of Liberalism owes some of its most inspiring pages—where is that belief now cherished? When our South African policy reached the fateful point when we had to choose the

way of peace or that of war, Liberalism was split in twain, and the party which a few years before boasted of its nationalist sympathies has to bear a heavy share of responsibility for the discreditable transaction which removed the names of two Republics—one, the best governed in the world—from our maps. If this criticism must be slightly modified by the splendid courage shown by the Liberal Government in establishing self-government in those conquered colonies at the very earliest possible time, it nevertheless must remain as a paragraph in the history of Liberalism.

In both vegetable and animal kingdoms, when youth is past, the hard structures of the body are hardened and thickened, the saps of life flow more and more slowly and suffer greater and greater impediments, until at length motion ceases altogether, the sap rises no more in the Spring, the blood pulses no more through the veins. The weakening life of the Liberal epoch has been the most marked feature of politics during the past quarter of a century.

Before the final silence comes and shadowy memory sits where life was, the forces of destruction, the armies of parasites, are already busy upon the decaying organism, preying upon its strength and living upon its substance. Even in human

affairs do we not often see this humiliating spectacle of harpies pouncing upon the treasures which the enfeebled being can no longer defend? Do we not detect this activity of the harpies of decay in our political life to-day? For what else are those organisations of one idea which induce electors to barter their votes and turn parties into separate fragments, which hang together only so long as each has a nostrum which has not hitherto been recognised by Act of Parliament, and which make alliances with other factions nursing other nostrums? So long as a party is in vigorous health it keeps these sectional interests in their places, and prevents the dominance of faction and the menace of particularism; but when it becomes feeble, these maggots luxuriate and fatten, and national interests pass under the custodianship of groups which have bargained with each other for a majority, and which live on the decaying life of what was once a healthy party.

But again, as in biology, dissolution happens only after germination, and organisms die only after they have given life to other organisms, so, in Society, one epoch dies after it has nurtured the epoch which is to succeed it in the process of evolution. The nurturing period is generally one of uncertainty of aim. Progress then raises many fears. Its goal is unfamiliar to men, and is

the subject of prejudice. Every vested interest tries to combine to keep back the change which it dreads. How far do the characteristics of the present alleged reaction correspond to what we should expect to find in the condition intervening between the vital activity of an epoch that has "lived its " life," and that of another which is as yet an infant in the womb of Time?

Do present political conditions fulfil such an expectation? Is the reaction through which we have gone and which culminated in the South African War, its mismanagement, its waste, and its hysterics, a definite back-sliding? Or, is it the lethargy, the stupor and the unsettlement of a people passing through a crisis in its development? Has it been accompanied by changes in vital organisation which are as yet rudimentary, but promising?

VI.

In a book recently published, written for the purpose of discussing this alleged reaction,* complaint is made that the biological theory of the struggle for life, misinterpreted and misunderstood, has afforded a new defence for aristocracy and for government by classes, and has weakened the con-

* *Democracy and Reaction,* by L. T. Hobhouse, London, 1905.

ception of democratic equality as a guide in politics, economics and ethics. This, however, is true only to a small extent, and is much less true in this country (where the reaction has been more marked than anywhere else) than in France or Germany. Discussions on the application of Darwinism to politics have hardly rippled the surface of politics here. Mr. Spencer's anti-Socialism was never more than a wail against new times and new men. His political arguments have not had the least weight on our public policy. They have never won the ear of a statesman as the *Wealth of Nations* won Pitt's ear, and the only attempt to make them the basis of a propagandist society was initiated by a few obscurantist peers and private persons.†

† Recently in connection with the anti-socialist campaign, organisations have been started which might have been expected to "go back to Spencer" for their principles. But they are mere political societies without any clear or intelligent idea either of what they want or what they are attacking. In this correction a manifesto and appeal issued by Lord Balfour of Burleigh, on behalf of one of these societies is important to the political student for its amazing confusion of thought. His Lordship innocently appealed for a state of society in which every man would own what he would produce, and asked people to believe that this economic doctrine was contrary to Socialism, whereas it has been the basis of the economic system most closely identified with the Socialist movement—c.f. Menger's *Right to the Whole Produce of*

Spencer's general philosophy, in the hands of intelligent students, has, however, contributed to the stability of Socialist thought, mainly by his clear exposition of the facts of social evolution. The Socialist literature of twenty years ago abounds in Spencerian arguments directed against Spencerian individualism.

During the reaction, little was said about science. It was, indeed, not a change in public opinion so much as a manifestation of the private interests which have acquired the leading newspapers circulating amongst the people, and obtained control of electoral machinery and a legislative majority. Private interests were enabled to do this owing to the temporary failure of political principles.

The individualism of the Rights of Man, as understood in the Eighteenth century—of the "all men are born free and equal" type—which was the foundation of Liberal politics, and which gave to the Liberal epoch such magnificent power for destroying the crumbling organisations of feudalism and for laying the foundations of democratic gov-

Labour, and more particularly Professor Foxwell's introduction to the English translation. More curiously still Mr. Balfour, a few weeks after, followed Lord Balfour in appropriating the economic foundation of early English Socialism as the aim of modern Toryism.

ernment, had to be supplanted by a doctrine of rights more accurate as to the facts of social life, before we could enter upon a constructive epoch. Hegelianism in the hands of the German bureaucrats and British Imperialists, is no doubt subversive to the most elementary condition of democracy; biological theories of evolution, in the hands of the threatened aristocratic and monopolist interests, are no doubt used to defend inequality, class government and the subjection of the many by the few. But the ultimate value of ideas cannot be estimated by the temporary abuse of those ideas, by their partial application, by the use made of them by interested classes in their own favour. The German bureaucrat and the British Imperialist are not to have the last word on the application of Hegelianism and Darwinism to politics, nor are the Conservative aristocracy always to be in the ascendant as they were during the last twenty years of the nineteenth century, and when they had, in consequence, an opportunity of concealing by scientific jargon about the survival of the fittest, or philosophical jargon about the governing classes, the simple fact that they are looking after themselves, and are preying upon the community.

Both Hegelianism and Darwinism, in some of their aspects, came into conflict with the political philosophy of the Liberal epoch;

both denied the principles of atomic individualism; both challenged the intellectual basis of Radical Democracy. Progressive politics had to be re-systematised. The old crutches were broken; the old lights blown out. The State has become a real thing and an essential condition of individual liberty; the social organism had become a real existence subject to laws of growth modified from those of natural selection by the fact that selective reason had become a factor in further change. And that had closed a chapter.

But when this happens, reaction always appears to follow. So soon as any prop is shattered or any old faith supplanted, a process of dissolution sets in. It is really not the old organisations which carry on the new life. This, for instance, happened at the Reformation, when Luther had to confess: "No sooner did our Gospel arise and get a "hearing than there followed a frightful con-"fusion. . . Every man at his free pleasure "would be and do what he liked in the way "of pleasure and license, so that all law, "rule and order were overthrown." This has happened every time that liberalising influences have softened the hard dogmas of faith, every time that the ethical imperative has been modified, that greater leisure, greater knowledge and greater comfort have freed men from the control of the dead hand, emancipated them from custom

and opened out wider and unfamiliar fields for them to explore and exploit.

But further, does not a careful examination of the period of reaction discover germinal growths which make us doubt the reality of reaction?

The political history of the past twenty years has not been a record of the defeat of the Liberal party and the rout of progressive opinion. It is mainly a record of the split-up of Liberalism and the disintegration of the progressive movement, broken by the extraordinary phenomenon of the election of 1906 which was in reality a striking demonstration in favour of the *status quo* and an emphatic vote of censure upon the Government. The bye-elections which followed showed that the country was returning to the hesitating mind of transition periods. It is of the greatest importance to remember this fact, if we are to arrive at an accurate conception of what is really going on. Like the cell which is about to divide and create a new organism, the Liberal party now contains more than one nucleus. At the same time a new manifestation of vital activity has appeared. Socialism has at length reached a stage when it is more than a diffused influence, and becomes part of a definite organ functioning in politics. Whilst for the moment the reactionary elements in

Society were luxuriating almost unchallenged in the midst of "a frightful "confusion," Socialism was becoming a definite factor in administration and legislation. Reaction in national affairs was proceeding whilst constructive policies in local government—Municipal Socialism—were becoming a menace to monopolists and individualists of all kinds; imperialist will-o'-the-wisps were enticing the people into muddy morasses, whilst sound policies of social reconstruction were lighting warning beacons to blaze for a century; whilst aristocratic notions were supplying wizard music to the ears of the crowds, the people were beginning to hum snatches of their own tunes; whilst the nation was applauding the grandiloquent sentiments of its privileged classes, it was beginning to formulate a few demands of its own, to ask itself how it liked the exercise, and to gather round it own advocates and applaud them with growing emphasis and ardour. Whilst the political parties of the reaction were congratulating themselves that they were secure from attack, the Labour Party was marshalling its forces and finding recruits from every political quarter.

The period of reaction has not been one of simple relapse. In local government, the period has been the most fruitful of any we have ever experienced. Even in legislation

and in national affairs, in spite of certain outstanding events, it has been far from purely retrogressive, whilst, in the country, harvests of political opinion have ripened which a few years ago appeared to be still rank and green. The period of so-called reaction has been, in reality, a period of reconstruction and reorganisation.

At the beginning of 1906, the tide turned. A Liberal Government was placed in office and behind it there sat a majority greater than had ever previously supported a ministry. A Labour Party also found a corner of its own in the House of Commons. The private interests which had manned the reaction became alarmed and a furious attack upon the Socialist movement was delivered. The Government dissociated itself from the defenders, and in some places its organisation joined heartily in the attack. Its official speakers laid down their principles lest there should be any mistake about them. These principles were: "Individual prop-"erty, individual enterprise, individual initiat-"ive"—words apparently precise in significance, but absolutely meaningless when applied to the social conditions requiring remedy. Even when the avowed Opposition laid down the economic grounds upon which it was to oppose the new movement, it pledged itself to establish a state under which a man would own what he earned *

*Mr. Balfour at Birmingham, 14th November, 1907

When the Government drafted its legislation, and when the opposition criticised it, no one thought of "individual property, indi- "vidual enterprise, and individual initiative," but of collective property, collective enterprise and collective initiative. So imperative in practice had the new organisation become, that the phrases of reaction were used merely for platform purposes when the fears of the people had to be appeased, but the ideas of the new progressivism guided all legislation aimed at the solution of the pressing questions of the day.

We have witnessed during the last quarter of the nineteenth century the transition from democracy clamouring for political recognition to democracy experimenting how best it can use its political power. Questions of political sovereignty have receded into history with those of kingly divine rights. From the parish to the nation, democratic forms have been conceded, and from the parish to the nation, democracy is now busy assuming authority, discussing what is its legitimate sphere of action, moving tentatively out in this and that direction, making incursions upon fields hitherto held to be sacred to individual enterprise, undertaking responsibilities which, it has hitherto been assumed generally, the public in their corporate and political capacity could not and ought not to assume.

We are still living too near to this change to see how thorough it is; the change itself is too little understood, its features are yet too much the haphazard concerns which meet us with the dawn and pass from our thoughts with the night, its inward meaning is too imperfectly seen, it is too split up into apparently disconnected fragments, for us to grasp the tremendous significance of the transition which is going on to-day from democracy in form to democracy in reality. The Franchise Acts of 1868 and 1884 closed, not merely a chapter, but an epoch in political evolution.

One special reason why we cannot see the magnitude of this change is that parties maintain their old names and appeal to their traditions. But that both Conservative and Liberal parties have been revolutionised in twenty-five years must be apparent to everyone who has withdrawn himself from the stream of political event and mapped its course through a generation. Mr. Herbert Spencer's polemical statement of the change in his *The Man versus the State* may be unfounded in its conclusions and mistaken in its inferences, but it is true in its facts. "Most of those who now pass as Liberals "are Tories of a new type";* "it seems need-"ful to remind everybody what Liberalism "was in the past, that they may perceive its

* *Op. cit.* p. 1.

"unlikeness to the so-called Liberalism of the "present . . . How are we to explain this "spreading confusion of thought which has "led it [Liberalism], in pursuit of what "appears to be public good, to invert the "method by which in earlier days it achieved "public good?"* And Mr. Spencer sees an inversion of method not only in the Liberal party. "If the present drift of things con- "tinues, it may by-and-bye really happen, that "the Tories will be defenders of liberties "which the Liberals, in pursuit of what they "think popular welfare, trample under "foot."† The facts which have induced Mr. Spencer to come to these conclusions are indisputable. He interprets them in the spirit of the controversialist. He throws upon them the misleading light of that rich fund of illustration which is his peculiar method. He perhaps fails to notice adequately that the change of the Tory party is quite as significant as that of the Liberal party, and he certainly falls into the profound error of assuming that any one principle of social policy will remain for ever the guide of progressive change. But the fact remains that, whether to its praise or blame, the progressive idea of the century has in these latter years borne fruit in ideals and purposes which seem to be in antagonism to their parentage.

* p. 4-5. † p. 17.

It is, therefore, no surface change which has taken place if present tendencies are to continue, and give birth to a new epoch of legislation. Our complete conception of democracy, its form, its functions, the nature of its government, its method of expressing itself, the interpretation which it is to put upon the old watchwords of liberty and progress, its relation to its pioneering heralds, is being revolutionised by the very short practical experience which we have had of its aspirations now that it has been established as sovereign power. The irresistible movement of events has transported us from thoughts of democratic form to thoughts of democratic function.

VII.

These conclusions have an important bearing upon the relation between the old parties and the new. One sometimes hears of "the profound gulf" fixed between Liberalism and Socialism, and of the Liberal party being crushed out. That is the thought of the logician who sees things in the abstract, and not of the biologist who is accustomed to deal with life. The fact is, there are no gulfs in the course of organic evolution, and nothing in the main path of that evolution has been crushed out. Lower forms merge into higher forms, one species into another,

the vegetable into the animal kingdom; in human history, one epoch slides into another. Each new stage in evolution retains all that was vital in the old and sheds all that was dead. Even when we see revolution and sudden change in thought or habits of peoples and individuals, we only behold the result of many hidden influences become visible. Socialism, the stage which follows Liberalism, retains everything that was of permanent value in Liberalism, by virtue of its being the hereditary heir of Liberalism.* Thus we have seen in recent times that when two vital principles of Liberalism were assailed—the existence of nationalities and the policy of free exchange between nations—Socialism rallied to their defence even when enfeebled Liberalism could not always command enough vital force to do so itself. The democratic work of Liberalism is the basis of the Socialist State; the individualist morality of Evangelicism is the basis of the social morality of Socialism; the organisation of production of Capitalism is the basis of Socialist economics and organisation of distribution.

Hence it is that the politicians' attempt to preach Social Reform as an alternative to

* It is worth while noting that this is also true of modern Toryism. The Toryism of the end of the Liberal epoch is a new creation owing to the achievement of that epoch. C.f. p. 140 f.n.

Socialism is false. Social Reform is the change which takes place in social relationships, economic and industrial, as they adjust themselves in the new social organisation. Socialism comes by a growth upwards not by a sinking backward. Social Reform is the path to Socialism; the process of change through which the ugly caterpillar becomes the magnificent butterfly.

Hence also, the creation of a political party that is not Socialist but only Socialistic —like our Labour Party—is not a thing for which Socialists need apologise to themselves, or regard as an unhappy expedient imposed upon them by force of circumstances. If Socialism is to come by a series of Social Reforms, as pounds accumulate by the collection of pence, each one contributing to the evolution of Society as a whole, it is as essential that Socialism should devise a means of expressing itself politically as that it should carry on the propaganda of its economic and industrial ideas. The difference between industrial and political Socialism is that, whilst the former on the whole is a creed, the latter is on the whole a method and is in a constant state of expansion and progress. Those Socialists who weep because the Labour Party is not Socialist, or who regard it as an ugly duckling forced upon them, have not yet applied their minds to the hard problem of political method—to

the hard problem of how Socialism is to be brought about. They have fallen into the same error as those politicians who think that Social Reform is an alternative to Socialism. The work of the Labour Party is to bring Socialism—if Socialists are right; it is to make Socialism impossible—if they are wrong. I for one am willing to test my faith by the acids of experience .

Gradual transition with periods of rapid change is peculiarly the characteristic of British conditions, where parties do not hold to principles as dogmas, but are prepared (within limits of course) to be guided by experience. Hence it is that during its growth a new political organisation in this country appeals not to one but to both the preceding political parties for recruits, and embodies principles from both, which it unifies by reason of its more commanding and comprehensive point of view. It is very nearly true that new wine *can* be poured into old bottles. The new biological offspring has much in common with its decaying parents—even when it is starting upon a totally new line of development.

The characteristics of the apparent reaction of our time are as follows:

The decline of vigour in the old progressive party and the activity within it of narrow-visioned and one idea groups:

The formation outside it of a nucleus of a new political party, building itself upon fundamental political theories which are the result of the pressure and character of current problems, and which differ from the fundamental principles of the old parties; and,consequently, the beginning of a series of experiments upon new lines:

The almost unconscious change in the principles which underlie administration and legislation, in the direction of the principles upon which the new party rests,* which cannot be altogether obscured by the reactionary doing of a Conservative party in power during the transition:

The steady growth of what may be called an unassimilated mass of political support, the result of social instinct rather than of individual reason, and also the result of a law of intellectual gravitation by which a small body made weighty because it knows its own mind, draws mass to it:

If in the meantime the reaction has been extreme—as has happened in our own time—the more healthy sections of the old party co-operate with the new party, and so by a process which is not altogether assimilation,

* The explanation of this is, that fruitful political ideas cannot precede very long in time vital social movements; that these movements begin to transform society even when it is busy combatting and rejecting their theoretical and absolute expression.

but very much like one of sexual reproduction, the new political organism which is to carry on the life of the epoch is at last formed.

This party flourishes until in due time its vitalising idea is enfeebled by success, and it becomes pregnant with a new political life to which it gives birth and then passes away.

This is the normal process. Repression, force, revolution, catastrophe modify it, but this is the order of birth, virility and decay which has hitherto been the life story of all political parties.

The Socialist party will be no exception to the rule. Away beyond into the eternal future we cannot go. The only thing we are certain about is that Socialism itself will create problems hardly dreamt of as yet, and that in its bosom will generate a new social life which can be brought to birth only through the gateway of death and dissolution. But sufficient for the day is the good thereof.

To solve the problem of poverty by co-ordinating the various functions of society; to quicken the social instinct by making the community play a greater part in individual life; to discover to men, wearied after a fruitless search for liberty, that the paradise they sought is to be found in faithful service

to their group and ultimately to humanity; to bring law and ethics into vital relationship with life; to create from the anarchy and injustice of the present day, order and fairness; to make the State a hive of busy workers enjoying their rights only by virtue of their services; and to use as the power of action from which these changes are to come the conception that the State is the complement of the individual and legislation a form of individual will—that is to be the task and the method of the Socialist Epoch.

CONCLUSION.

Our experience has shown that the ownership and use of monopolies essential to the production of wealth, like land, and of the capital required under the factory and associated labour system, determine the method of distribution, and the extent to which the individual members of a community share in its wealth and prosperity.

So long as land is privately owned it can exact unjust tolls from public and private enterprise, and its owner can dip his hands into stores of wealth created, commonly in spite of his opposition, and nearly always without his help.

This is no place to discuss in detail the merits of the rival schools of Land Nationalisation and the Single Tax in any of its forms. Suffice it to say that not only is the Single Tax wrong in its economic theory, and inaccurate in its description of itself, but it would fail to solve the problem of the private ownership of land. The Socialist must support the nationalisation of the land itself and not merely the nationalisation of a portion of rent.

But when the land has been nationalised, the private ownership of industrial capital will still present the problems which arise when the supply of public needs is left to the care of private interests. The nationalisation of the land will not solve industrial problems. Unemployment alternating with overtime, riches with poverty, the trading in luxuries and the pandering to vices and weaknesses which private interest encourages without a thought of the wider consequences, because it is concerned only with the more immediate making of profit upon any transaction, all point to the same conclusion—the control and co-ordination of industrial capital by the community.

If one could rely upon moral checks on individual conduct, or if it were sufficient to set bounds to anti-social action by legislative enactment, a mingling of public law and private character might be a sufficient safeguard for the public, and thus the problem of the use of industrial capital might be solved on lines individualistic in the main. No doubt, this solution would preserve to us some of the advantages of the individualist regime which, were it possible, we might well take pains to preserve. But when we survey the tendency of the times, the rise of the financier in succession to the legitimate business man, the soulless character of most of our industrial organisations, the strangl-

ing pressure which trading interests place upon moral impulse, we must give up in despair any hope that in this way can the problem be solved. Public ownership must be resorted to. Industry must be organised like a fleet or an education system.

No doubt within the limits of the existing social organisation, much could be done to aid a more equitable and economic distribution of wealth. The incidence of taxation could be readjusted so that incomes which represent services rendered might be relieved, whilst those representing rents and monopoly profits might be more heavily burdened. Following the idea that what appears to be over-production is in reality under-consumption,* caused by a method of distribution which necessitates a wasteful and harmful accumulation of wealth at one end and so acts as a bar to the steady and uninterrupted flow of wealth through Society, we may go some length yet under our present system in the direction of increasing the consuming efficiency of the public and thus maintaining a steady demand for labour. But

* Writing of this, one must acknowledge the splendid services which Mr. J. A. Hobson has done, both to the science of economics and the art of government, in working out and applying his theory of under-consumption, which was the basis of the *Physiology of Industry*, written by him and Mr. Mummery in 1889, and amplified by him in subsequent books.

the key to the position is production, and so long as production is in the hands of competing private individuals, demand and supply can never be kept in touch with each other except by periodic industrial crises, when some of the accumulation is scattered.

For the facts are these. Every producer to-day acts as though he meant to capture the whole market for himself, and so long as there is an effective demand to satisfy, he produces to the utmost capacity of his producing machinery. In times of confidence he is ever confident. He does not think of the many streams of produce flowing in to take the place of the materials drawn off by the consumer—in fact under the present system of competitive industry, he would be foolish if he did think of them; he only thinks of how the stream issuing from his own works may be as great in volume as possible. He very properly makes hay while the sun shines. Then, his people are working overtime; they are making unusually high wages, and as they are living in a rush and are over-exhausted, they spend a high percentage of their income uneconomically. The inevitable glut takes place. In two years the unregulated powers of production can produce enough to satisfy at least three years of consumption.

Hence it is evident that however desirable it may be to increase the powers of consump-

tion enjoyed by the wage-earning classes, that of itself will not obviate industrial crises, because it will only be a further incentive to the individual producer to produce a greater proportion of the markets' demands. A rising demand is a spur upon supply. It is also obvious that abstention, thrift and temperance on the part of the wage earners will not avoid unemployment periods (although such conduct might rob them of some of their worst experiences), because these periods are not caused by the faults of consumers. They are one of the products of our machinery of production. There can be no steadiness of industry so long as there is anarchy in production. The flow of production must be regulated at its source. The instruments of production must be socialised before unemployment is obviated and the problem of distribution solved.

This is supposed to be tantamount to saying that there must be no further improvements in machinery, no further advances in industrial organisation, no more saving of effort. But that is a mistake. Under Socialism, a portion of the national production will be earmarked for experiments, and there will be more room for, and encouragement given to inventive initiative and experimenting with new processes than under the

present system which, by entrusting production to competing individuals, by encouraging the growth of monopolies, and by stunting human capacity, is, in spite of its boasts to the contrary, pre-eminently unfitted to develop to the utmost either the human or the mechanical elements in production. The Economic epoch cannot complete itself.

So far from being a static state, Socialism, by raising each worker into the position of co-partnership with all other workers, and by proportioning reward to approved honest effort, will call for such an application of science to industry as the world has not yet seen. It will provide a constant incentive to improve the means of production because such improvement will not be a menace to labour, but a direct and certain cause of more leisure and comfort to it. Under Socialism, one may rest assured, national production will not only be charged with the expenses of the political state, but with the wear and tear of the industrial state —*i.e.*, old-age pensions, improvements in machinery, scientific experiments.

I have been aware whilst writing of the problem of distribution, that our economists endeavour to deny altogether its existence in the character in which I have been considering it. Professor Marshall tells us that

"capital in general and labour in general" are rewarded "in the measure of their re- "spective (marginal) efficiencies,"* a somewhat vague statement which leaves the reader to answer for himself the question which immediately occurs: "Efficiencies in "what?" But the most detailed examination of the subject that has been made by an orthodox economist in recent years is that by Professor Smart.† His conclusion is that there is enough "rough justice" in the present system to enable him to call it "Distribution according to service." The public, according to him, by making demands and by patronising or neglecting to patronise, rewards with wealth or dooms with failure. This, however, is not the case. The machinery of production, of financing, of buying and selling is not run by the public, but by interested parties. The public have not placed South African mine magnates in Park Lane, and English workmen in two or three-roomed houses in dull, sunless streets. The public did not cause the American financial panic, the bitter fruits of which have not been fully plucked as yet.‡ The conditions under which property is held, and under which the function of production is carried on, the relation between the

* *Principles of Economics,* London, 1898, p. 617.

† *The Distribution of Income,* London, 1899.

‡ Summer of 1908.

market and the factory on the one hand and the home and the factory on the other—in short the whole productive mechanism—determine the proportion of national income assigned to each of the classes in the community.*

The conclusion to which we are driven is that those economists in whose hands economics is simply a descriptive and not a critical science, are compelled to accept the present state of distribution as something which has to be defended with a mild amount of enthusiasm. The Socialist who regards economics as a branch of Sociological science and who illuminates it by discriminating appreciation or depreciation of the social conditions which exist at present, is not content with those descriptive exercises and those ingenious apologies for what is. The science of economics and the art of government should go hand in hand. In that respect the Socialist goes back to Adam Smith. He is not content with Professor Marshall's "efficiencies," which, if the word means anything at all, only begs the question in dispute, or with Professor Smart's misleading "given private property." He does

* It is true that Professor Smart lays down as a condition to his conclusion stated above, "given private property." But it is not "private" property which is the important thing at all, but the present organisation, scope and use of private property.

not think that existing distribution is just, he regards the character of the productive mechanism as the determinant of how distribution is to be made; and from that standpoint he sees the inadequacy of all personal and individualist theories accounting for mal-distribution, such as drunkenness and improvidence, and he labours, in consequence, for a readjustment of the parts of the mechanism.

At the same time he takes no mechanical view of the problem. He knows that an absolutely accurate distribution according to merit is quite impossible. The problem is biological, and is therefore incapable of a nice mathematical solution down to moral decimal points. Nor indeed is this necessary. We do not object to the present system because it fails to discriminate between desserts measured by £100 and those measured by £100 and sixpence. We object to it because it dooms whole classes to inadequate food, inadequate mental equipment, inadequate opportunities to become human beings; and all that Socialism and a Socialist system of distribution can claim to do is to destroy social parasites, and secure that everyone that gives service to Society shall receive from Society an ample measure of opportunities to live and enjoy living.

Attempts have been made from time to

time to lay down limits to the socialising process, and settle by *a priori* logical methods that certain trades are in their nature individualistic, and, therefore, incapable of being included within the scope of Socialist reconstruction.

That may or may not be so. We are not in a position at the present time to hold any very definite opinion on the subject. The character of these trades—*i.e.*, the artistic group—will not remain as it is at present, after Society has taken upon itself a different organic form. It may be that their necessities will be the soil from which is to spring the new growth of social idea which will characterise the epoch after Socialism. But, whether the one or the other happens, matters little to us at present.

The function of the Socialist theory is to guide. The seaman, in his voyages across the seas, steers by certain marks, and at certain points alters his course and follows new marks when the old can lead him no further. So with Socialism. Its method is not the architectural and dogmatic one of building straight away from bottom to top, but the organic and experimental one of relieving immediate and pressing difficulties *on a certain plan, and in accordance with a certain scheme of organisation.*

We have, therefore, begun with municipal

administration, and have proceeded from water to trams and from light to milk, the necessity for the latter developments being suggested partly by the principle which underlay the first experiments, and partly because as a matter of experience certain definite grievances met us as we went on.

From administration to legislation is a natural and necessary step. As pressing matters like housing and trams were ready for treatment, and as practical plans had already been prepared for their settlement, they were first of all dealt with. As in Municipal Socialism, so in National Socialism, the harvest which is ripe and most easily reaped will be gathered first, and the experience gained in reaping it will be used when later harvests have to be brought in. Thus, we shall begin the process of nationalising capital by taking over services like the railways, or by securing for the whole community such values as mining royalties; or we shall begin the process of industrial reconstruction by agrarian policies which will bring the towns into contact with the country, re-populate deserted villages, and re-till the wasted fields. As the problem of the unemployable and the unemployed is most pressing, and as it is the direct result of some of the most glaring follies and imperfections of our present system, it will afford the first opportunities

of establishing Socialism on a large scale. This will open out the way for us, and further steps will come naturally. *Solvitur ambulando,* not *sic volo*—laboratory experiment, not revolution—is the method of Socialism emerged from its Utopian and pseudo-scientific stages.

It has been said that this method will postpone the Socialist millennium till doomsday. But the reply is obvious. Social resistance to change is much more quickly and surely overcome by these methods of organic modification than by any Utopian revolutionary attempts.

Another point of some importance in Socialist controversy must be dealt with. Torrents of printed matter have been issued from the press, discussing how property is to be held under Socialism —and all to no purpose. The Socialist creed is that property can be legitimately held only as the reward of services. It condemns the existing state of things, because those who do no service own most property.* Social-

* Cf. "How small a part of all the labour performed in England, from the lowest paid to the highest, is done by persons working for their own benefit. Under the present system of industry this incitement [property in labour's produce] does not exist in the great majority of cases." Mill, *Political Economy,* bk. II., chap. 1. Compare this with Mr.

ism is, therefore, a defence of property against the existing order. As, however, it regards the living factor in production—man—as being of more consequence than the dead factors—land and capital,—it seeks to set limits upon the employment of property for the purpose of keeping men in economic subjection, and it proposes to organise Society in such a way as to render it necessary that the services upon which property is held are continuous, and not as to-day, stored up, so that a Marlborough, who fought a few battles and had a wife who could manage her sovereign two centuries ago, could found a family and put it in a position to consume other people's wealth for ever and ever. To secure this aim, Socialism need not refuse to recognise the right of inheritance. Its business is not to prevent accumulation, or prohibit its transference, but to provide that such accumulation is not made at the public expense, and is not employed to keep the public in subjection for all generations.

But, on the other hand, the Socialist contends that the community, as well as the individual, creates value which it should hold as property and devote to common interests.

Balfour's imaginative economics propounded at Birmingham (15th November, 1907) "Individual energy can only be called forth by a system based upon the fact that what a man earns he owns."

Every valid argument which establishes the right of individuals to own and use property, is equally applicable to a defence of the community's right to own and use property. Social income, in the shape of taxes and rates, is not private income appropriated. It is public wealth devoted to public uses. If our taxation were imposed so that values created by the public were placed in the public exchequers, the effect would be to deprive parasitic classes of their nourishment, ease industrious classes of their burdens, and provide nourishment for the useful organs of the community. Here there opens out another broad avenue leading to the Socialist state.

I do not know if it is really necessary to consider the objection taken by some politicians to Socialism on the ground that when the means of production are socialised there can be no private property, so manifestly absurd is the contention. The social ownership of industrial capital is essential to the enjoyment of private property in the fruits of one's labour. Collective and private property are not mutually destructive but mutually helpful. If the argument were advanced with any serious force, one might drive the reply further, and say that if collective property is so fatal to enterprise and industry, it has precisely the same economic and industrial features as Joint Stock and

Limited Liability property. The holders of stock in a tram company are little more directly concerned in its success, and much less able to influence its working, than are the ratepayer owners of a municipal service.

Similarly, we have had acute discussion which has been worse than useless, upon labour notes, coins, and other forms of Socialist currency and standards of value. At the present moment all that the Socialist need do is to lay down and defend as a general principle that reward for work should be certain and sufficient, and that full opportunity should be given to each adult to work at some remunerative employment. Whether our successors are to calculate in labour notes or in pounds sterling, and whether they are to establish an equality of reward for all services (a thing not at all essential to Socialism, though not at all undesirable from some points of view), our successors will have to decide when the application of Socialist principles has gone so far as to make the matter a practical one. Some things will have happened in the interval, we may depend upon it, which will have a very important bearing on the question. Again, not *Sic volo*, but *Solvitur ambulando!*

A misunderstanding regarding the Social-

ist attitude to labour-saving machinery is equally widespread. At present, as I have explained, such machinery is used by a class in the interests of that class primarily. The convenience of the machine is the first consideration in the industrial organisation. If it does skilled work the skilled workman is displaced, if it does heavy work the strong workman is displaced, if it splits up complicated work into simple and automatic processes women and children take the places of men. Without any attempt being made to protect human interests, to conserve social experience, to guard spiritual growths like the family, we permit Society to be moulded by the operations of machinery. To-day we have in many towns—of which those engaged in the boot and shoe and hosiery trades may be taken as examples—a movement going on which will end in the transformation of women and girls into the bread-winners of the family, and of men and boys into casual labourers or habitual loafers. When this tendency is pointed out to well-meaning people they admit its potency, but shrug their shoulders in helpless despair. What can be done? The men must go. The machine, like the young cuckoo, must wriggle the other fledglings out of the nest to make room for itself. It is sad but inevitable!

The Socialist objects to this. He is deter-

mined to make the machine a social instrument, to make it serve society and not control Society. He is therefore not against mechanical invention. He is no Luddite. His idea is that such aids to labour should be controlled in the common interest. Moral considerations should in the main determine the form of social organisation, and the non-social use of economic forces should be put an end to before they destroy the moral growths which Society at present possesses. The Socialist welcomes every new machine, but demands that it be used as part of a moral organisation, and not put into operation under the control of sectional economic interests. Machinery must amplify life, not profits;* it must therefore be subject to social control, and not class control.

Within the scope of this communal organisation of industry there will be need for smaller groups, such as trade unions, churches, families. Indeed, the larger organisation will greatly depend upon the smaller groups for its vitality. As the communal organisation becomes more efficient,

* The argument that the community benefits by the cheap products of machinery is good up to a point. The cheapness of sweating, the cheapness which destroys craftsmanship, the cheapness which means unemployment, is the cheapness of deterioration. Socialism also means cheapness, but cheapness consistent with social wellbeing.

the individual will respond with more intelligence and more character, and as the individual thus responds, these smaller groups will become more important. Trade unionism keeping the communal industrial organisation in the closest touch with the needs of the workers; a church attending with enthusiastic care to the life, and not merely to the dogma, of Christianity; a family organisation built upon a sound economic basis and serving, in as pure a form as humanity will allow, the spiritual needs of men and safeguarding at the same time the rights of the community, would be precious organs in the body communal.

One of the assumptions which bear up the fabric of Socialist thought and expectation is, that as Society approaches in its organisation to the Socialist condition, the individual will respond to the moral responsibilities which that condition will lay upon him. The individual is in tune with his Society, and for that reason Socialism can purify the gross, blundering, vulgar thing to-day called individualism into an impulse which will seek to express itself and find its liberty in social conduct through service to the community.

Hence it is that the key idea to the understanding of Socialism is not a wiping out but a transformation, not a re-creation but a fulfilment. The impulses and appetites of the

old are to be carried on into the new, but they are to run in different channels and demand different nourishment.

At the threshold of Socialist speculation stands as sentinel the Law of Continuity, and as guides the Laws of Variation.

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THE

SOCIALIST LIBRARY.

PROSPECTUS.

FOR some time it has been felt that there is a deplorable lack in this country of a Socialist literature more exhaustive and systematic than pamphlets or newspaper articles. In every other country where the Socialist movement is vigorous, such a literature exists, and owing to it Socialism has taken a firmer hold upon the intellectual classes, and, amongst Socialists themselves, its theories and aims are better understood than they are here.

Comparing the output of Socialist literature in Germany and France with Great Britain, one must be struck with the ephemeral nature of the great bulk of the matter which we publish, and the almost complete absence of any attempts to deal exhaustively with Socialism in its many bearings in economics, history, sociology and ethics. This failure is all the more to be regretted, because just as the special development of British industrialism afforded the basis for much of the constructive work of foreign

Socialists half a century ago, so the growth of British democratic institutions and the characteristics of British political methods have a special and direct bearing upon Socialist theories and tactics.

It is also disquieting to think that, on the one hand, the intellectual life of our country is becoming more and more attached in its interests and sympathies to reaction, and that, on the other, so many who lift up their voices against backward tendencies either look behind with regretful regard upon policies which are exhausted and can no longer guide us, or frankly confess that they are disconsolate without hope.

To the promoters of this LIBRARY, Socialism appears to be not only the ideal which has to be grasped before the benumbing pessimism which lies upon the minds of would-be reformers can be removed, but also the one idea which is guiding such progressive legislation and administration to-day as are likely to be of permanent value. But those experimenting with Socialism are only groping; are working with an instrument they do not understand; are applying an idea they have not grasped; and it is therefore believed that as a practical contribution to political principles and methods, the LIBRARY may be of some value.

The LIBRARY, however, with more assurance of definite success, will aim at providing studies in Socialism, or from Socialistic

standpoints, which will be stimulating to the Socialist movement, and which may do something to knit together the different sections of Socialist opinion and activity in this country. It will contain translations of the best works of foreign Socialists, as well as contributions from our own writers.

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April, 1905.

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